

Life-Sharing Lesson 1 “Why Care About People: God Calls Us” Mark 1:14-20

1. When was the first time you were invited to join a team of any kind and what did you expect to happen?

The first team I was invited on a team was in 4th grade on the baseball team. I expected to get involved in the game. I expected to do my best to try to help the team win.

2. What do you think Jesus expects of us after we get saved?

Jesus expects us to begin every part of our desires and our lives over to Him, to be used in ways that would further serve His kingdom and His desire for our lives. Jesus expect us to join the team of believers who reach out to bring others to the team for Jesus.

3. When should a new believer begin to cut himself/herself away from old unsaved friends?

There are times when a new believers needs to cut themselves off from some of their old friends if they cannot resist the temptations that they left. For instance someone who has given his/her life to Christ, but is still struggling with the issue of drugs, should not hang with friends who are still using drugs. However, new believers often have the best contacts with people who are unsaved and are still in relationship to them. Most people come to church because a friend or family member invited them. We should not be encouraging new believers to cut off all old relationships. Some of those relationship should be maintained so that the friends can see what Jesus is doing in their lives. The old friends should be viewed as potential new members in the life of the church or in the body of Christ. The longer people are Christians, the fewer non-Christian friends they have which make it more difficult for them to be effective evangelists. We should not got new believers so wrapped up in the life of the church that we leave them little room to reach out to their unsaved friends. A person needs to know when temptation requires a letting go of some people in our past, but it should not be assumed that to come out of the world is the same thing as leaving unsaved relationships behind. Coming out of the world means coming out of a lifestyle and a way of thinking. It does not mean the rejection of people.

Mark 1:14-20 Today's New International Version (TNIV)**Jesus Announces the Good News**

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Commentary

1:14 *Now after John was put in prison.* ^{NKJV} *Mark mentioned the arrest of John the Baptist as merely a signal for the ministry of Jesus into Galilee, his home region. Luke explained that John was arrested because he publicly rebuked King Herod for taking his brother's wife. John's public protests greatly angered Herod, so he put John in prison, presumably to silence him. The family of Herods were renowned for their cruelty and evil; it was Herod the Great who ordered the murder of the babies in Bethlehem ([Matthew 2:16](#)). The Herod who imprisoned John was Herod Antipas; his wife was Herodias, Herod Antipas's niece and formerly his brother's wife. The imprisonment of John the Baptist was only one evil act in a family filled with incest, deceit, and murder.*

**Fractures well cur'd make us more strong.
George Herbert**

Jesus came to Galilee. ^{NKJV} *Jesus moved from Nazareth, his hometown, to Capernaum, about twenty miles farther north. Capernaum became Jesus' home base during his ministry in the northernmost region of Palestine, Galilee. Jesus probably moved (1) to get away from intense opposition in Nazareth, (2) to have an impact on the greatest number of people (Capernaum was a busy city, and Jesus' message could reach more people and spread more quickly), and (3) to utilize extra resources and support for his ministry. Jesus' move fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah [9:1-2](#), which states that the Messiah will be a light to the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the region of Galilee where Capernaum was located. Zebulun and Naphtali were two of the original twelve tribes of Israel.*

LIFE APPLICATION

PRISON MINISTRY

We must remember to bring the Good News of God's kingdom to prisoners like John the Baptist. Being caged, denied the benefit of work and the comfort of family and friends, and always under guard must make a person feel like an animal. Prisons are filled with people who are filled with guilt.

So Jesus taught that prisoners need the Good News; they need relief and restoration. People put in prison because their opinions challenge secular authority (as with John the Baptist) need hope and vindication. All prisoners need to feel like human beings again, important to God, capable of work, needed by someone. As a Christian, you can share God's Good News with prisoners and be an angel of mercy. Through your words, faith can climb prison walls and set prisoners free.

Proclaiming the good news of God.^{NIV} What is the good news of God? These first words spoken by Jesus in Mark give the core of his teaching: the long-awaited Messiah had come to break the power of sin and begin God's personal reign on earth. This was indeed good news from God because most of the people who heard this message were oppressed, poor, and without hope. Jesus' words were good news because they offered freedom, justice, and hope. Though at first the listeners thought he referred to political freedom and civil justice, true disciples would learn after his crucifixion that the freedom was from sin, the mercy was from God and not people, and the hope was for new life with him.

1:15 *And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near."^{NRSV} Jews of Jesus' day understood exactly what Jesus meant when he proclaimed the time is fulfilled. The Greek word used for time, *kairos*, refers to a particular time period with its beginning marked by an extremely important event. This placed Jesus' coming in the center of God's plan for revelation and redemption. The Old Testament prophets often spoke of the future kingdom, ruled by a descendant of King David, that would be established on earth and exist for eternity. Thus when Jesus spoke of the "time" and the presence of the kingdom of God, the Jews understood him to mean that the Messiah had come to "fulfill" or inaugurate his long-awaited kingdom. Jesus reassured them that God was in sovereign control. He had begun to act in a new and decisive way. The most critical time had come. The door to God's great future had been flung open.*

Have we felt our sins, and forsaken them? Have we taken hold of Christ, and believed? We may reach heaven without learning or riches or health or worldly greatness. But we will never reach heaven if we die unrepentant and unbelieving.

J. C. Ryle

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Of course, this caused great excitement among the people. The problem arose, however, in the misunderstanding of the nature of this kingdom. The kingdom of God began when God entered history as a human being. But the kingdom of God will not be fully realized until all evil in the world has been judged and removed. Christ came to earth first as a suffering Servant; he will come again as King and Judge to rule victoriously over all the earth. The kingdom he inaugurated on earth would not overthrow Roman oppression and bring universal peace immediately. The kingdom of God that began quietly in Palestine was God's rule in people's hearts. The everlasting kingdom would not begin for many years (it has not yet begun), yet the kingdom was as near as people's willingness to make Jesus king over their lives. As Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you" ([Luke 17:21](#) NIV). The everlasting kingdom may still be many years away for us, yet it is as near as accepting Jesus' sacrifice for salvation.

"Repent, and believe in the good news."¹^{NRSV} Jesus began his ministry with the very word people had heard John the Baptist say: Repent. The message is the same today. Becoming a follower of Christ means turning away from our self-centeredness and "self" control and turning our lives over to Christ's direction and control. As mentioned in [1:4](#), repentance has two sides—turning away from sin and believing in the good news. The Good News, the gospel, means that Jesus, the promised Messiah, has come to usher in a new age of God's dealings with his people.

LIFE APPLICATION

GREAT NEWS

Jesus preached the gospel—the Good News—to anyone who wanted to hear it and to many who didn't. The gospel is that the kingdom of God has come, that God is with us, and that he cares for us. Christ can heal us, not just of physical sickness, but of spiritual sickness as well. There's no sin or problem too great or too small for him to handle. Jesus' words were good news because they fulfilled the promise of freedom, hope, peace of mind, and eternal life with God. He can handle your problems too.

[Verse 15](#) provides a summary of Jesus' gospel message and gives us one of the most important expressions of the gospel in the New Testament. The first half details what God has done for us: He has fulfilled the time and brought near the kingdom of God. The second half details what we must do to participate: repent and believe.

FOUR FISHERMEN FOLLOW JESUS / [1:16-20](#) / [33](#)

Jesus did not approach Simon and Andrew as strangers. We know from the Gospel of John ([1:35-49](#)) that they had had previous contact.

Jesus confronted these men with a challenge beyond the one he presented in his public preaching. He called the crowds to repentance and belief. He invited Simon and the others to follow him. They had already repented and believed. Now they were being called into discipleship.

The Lord used their previous vocation as a metaphor of their new calling. The former fishermen would now be fishers of men. God finds a way to make good use of every past experience we have to help us serve him.

[1:16](#) And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee.^{NKJV} The Sea of Galilee is, in reality, a large lake—650 feet below sea level, 150 feet deep, and surrounded by hills. Fishing was the main industry for the approximately thirty towns that surrounded the Sea of Galilee during Jesus' day. The word "by" means alongside. Jesus was walking on the beach. He knew the fishermen for whom he was searching would be in this location.

He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.^{NKJV} Fishing with nets was the most common method. A circular net (ten to fifteen feet in diameter) was cast into the sea. Then it was drawn up, and the catch was hoisted into the boat. Their method was like gathering and harvesting. Fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were strong and busy men.

The first pair of men Jesus called to follow him were brothers, Simon and Andrew. This was not the first time Simon and Andrew had met Jesus. Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist who, when introduced to "the Lamb of God," turned and followed Jesus ([John 1:35-40](#)). Andrew then brought his brother Simon to Jesus. When Jesus met Simon he said, "'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter)" ([John 1:42](#) NIV). These men understood and believed who Jesus was. Jesus arrived on the shore that day to change their lives forever.

LIFE APPLICATION

BUSY PEOPLE

People chosen by God for a special mission are never just sitting around, daydreaming, waiting, doing nothing—then suddenly, the CALL! No. Instead, when Jesus selected disciples to train as evangelists, teachers, and missionaries, he looked to hard workers and tradesmen—men in business, men up early, men who were not just talkers, but movers.

People today who are busy at work should be grateful for the energy and intelligence to compete for employment, and for the skill required to achieve results.

Such gifts are from God. Such busy people should also be listening, in prayer and meditation, for the call from the Lord that starts something new, a mission suited to their talents, to aid in bringing God's kingdom nearer to others.

1:17 *Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."^{NKJV} Jesus told Simon (Peter) and Andrew to leave their fishing business and follow him. "Follow" is a major term to signify discipleship in Mark's Gospel. It means to accept Jesus as authority, to pursue his calling, to model after his example, to join his group.*

- *In 2:14, Jesus told Levi, "Follow me."*
- *In 8:34, Jesus told the disciples to take up their crosses and "follow me."*
- *In 10:21, Jesus told the rich young man to sell all he had and "come, follow me."*
- *In John 21:19, just before Jesus' ascension, Jesus told Peter to "Follow me" even in death.*

(See also 1 Peter 2:21 and 2 Thessalonians 3:9.)

In this verse, Jesus was asking these men to become his disciples and then begin fishing for people to also follow Jesus.

In the Old Testament, God is the fisher of men, harvesting them for judgment (Jeremiah 16:16; Ezekiel 29:4-5; 38:4; Amos 4:2; Habakkuk 1:14-17). The urgency for the gathering of souls is that judgment is coming, so they were to bring people in while there was still time. These disciples were adept at catching fish, but they would need special training before they would become able to fish for people's souls. Fishing for people would be harder and more dangerous. Jesus was calling them away from their productive trades to be productive spiritually by helping others believe the Good News and carry on Jesus' work after he was gone. These men already knew Jesus, so when Jesus called them, they were willing to follow him. I will make portrays Jesus as the creative agent; our task is to follow him.

LIFE APPLICATION

FISHING FOR PEOPLE

Jesus called the disciples to fish for souls with the same energy they had previously used to fish for food. The gospel would be like a net, pulling people into its grasp, transforming their lives. Many people would be lifted from dark waters into the light of day.

How can God use you to be his fisher of men? How can you train new converts

*to find new seas and cast new nets where waters have never been fished before?
The gospel makes missionaries of all God's people.*

1:18 *They immediately left their nets and followed Him.^{NKJV} After their previous meeting with Jesus, Simon Peter and Andrew had returned to fishing. But when Jesus called them to follow him as disciples, they immediately left their nets. The judgment was coming; they had to respond at once.*

Every great person has first learned how to obey, whom to obey, and when to obey.
William A. Ward

Their lives had changed; their allegiance was now to their teacher. One pair left their occupation, the others their father (1:20). Mark taught radical discipleship; a person must leave all behind to follow Jesus.

LIFE APPLICATION

LEAVE IT AND FOLLOW

What can we learn from the disciples' response to Jesus' call?

- *What does Christ expect you to leave behind to follow him?*
 - *What sacrifice of personal achievement, wealth, or position does Christ ask you to make?*
 - *What prevents you from following Jesus immediately and wholeheartedly?*
 - *What must you do to eliminate these hindrances from your life?*
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1:19 *As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.^{NRSV} Not far down the beach was another pair of brothers, James and John, Simon Peter's partners (Luke 5:10). These men were sitting in their moored boat mending the nets. The weight of a good catch of fish and the constant strain on the nets certainly meant that the fishermen had to spend a lot of time keeping their nets repaired and in good shape. Holes had to be mended in preparation for the next night's fishing.*

John had met Jesus previously. In his Gospel, John records his own and Andrew's discipleship with John the Baptist and then their turning to follow Jesus (John 1:35-39). We have no record of James previously meeting Jesus, but he probably knew about Jesus from his brother. In any case, James and John were also ready for Jesus' call.

LIFE APPLICATION

IMMEDIATELY

James and his brother, John, along with Peter and Andrew, were the first disciples that Jesus called to work with him. Jesus' call motivated these men to get up and leave their jobs—immediately. They didn't make excuses about why it wasn't a good time. They left at once and followed. Jesus calls each of us to follow him. When Jesus asks us to serve him, we must be like the disciples and do it at once.

1:20 *Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.^{NRSV} Both sets of brothers immediately left behind the lives they had known and embarked on an incredible adventure. Surely the impression Jesus made upon them must have been great, and the certainty of their call must have been strong for them to follow without hesitation. James and John left their father in the boat. Zebedee must have been a very understanding father; perhaps he too believed and would have gone along himself in younger days.*

LIFE APPLICATION

UNDERSTANDING PARENTS

Let's not forget that Zebedee's life was changed too. He had to say good-bye to his sons, trusted partners in the business, loyal workers, daily companions. What had he been working for, poor old Zebedee, if not to make his sons more prosperous in business than he had been? But Jesus changed all that.

Parents of children who sense a call to missions should not balk if the family business takes second place to God's business. Parents who have encouraged their offspring from early childhood to pray and follow Christ should not cry foul when son or daughter puts all of life on the altar of service.

Zebedee adjusted, we hope, and prayed daily for his sons. Parents today may heave a sigh, wonder about practicalities, and worry about a child's financial security. But then in faith, pray, support, and give those children anew to God.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark.

4. What did Jesus mean when he said, “He would send us out to fish for people” or in earlier translations “ make us fishers of men and of women.”

Jesus was offering an invitation to join his team in reaching people for the kingdom of God. He recognized that people were not going to just stumble into the kingdom of God. Someone was going to have to go after them and exert some effort to bring them into the kingdom of God. Jesus calls us into relationship with him in order to turn us around and send us out in order to assist in bringing still others in to him. The emphasis first though is on “Come Follow Me.” We have to follow Jesus in order to be equipped to become fishers

5. Why are we tempted to ride in the boat and come up with great plans for each other, rather than taking the time to actually fish for people?

We are much better at establishing Christian Groups, choirs, activities, and studies than we are setting up fishing programs. We are not as worried about rejection when setting up Christian activities because we are basically dealing with those of like mind. When we go fishing, we have this irrational fear of somehow we are going to be eaten up by the fish. The fear of the rejection is nothing but a tool of the enemy. That is why we need to claim the following Scriptures for our daily lives. We probably struggle with being ashamed of the gospel because the world does not give its approval to the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:7 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7King James Version (KJV)

⁷For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind

Romans 1:15-16 KJV

¹⁵So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:15-20 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

¹⁵ That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. ¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,^[a] just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”^[b]

6. What does it mean it to say we caught another fish?

A Fish is caught when a person makes the decision to follow Christ. We are fishing in all sorts of places including our homes, and we even continue to fish in the church. Chances are, we are fishing for someone in this group.

7. Who or what did God use to catch you?

God used several people to fish for me. There was my grandmother who had recently gotten saved and led me to Interfaith Church. There was a football injury they caused me to see I was not in control. There was Rev. Bakker who shared the gospel with me their in the hospital room. There was the church family at Interfaith that helped me to see that God was at work in people’s lives.

8. Where would you be today, if God would of not sent someone to catch you?

I hate to think of where I would be. I never knew how selfish I really was until I came to know Christ. I didn’t know how foolish I was in my way of thinking until after walking with Christ. I doubt if I could have had a successful marriage. I may have not escaped the money and sex trap. I probably would have journeyed down the same path of having kids without having been there to have been a father to them. I think there would have been a lot more disappointments and emptiness in my life. I would have been searching without knowing what I was searching for.

9. Why is catching others, so important to God that God sends us out to do it?

Only God knows the full potential that we all have in Him. God loves people. God wants what is best for people. God knows that no one is going to come to a knowledge of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on their own. We have to go out and tell them about Jesus. If we do not fish, people will miss out on the life that could be theirs. There are a lot of people who look like they have it altogether who really are empty inside. An illness, a loss of a job, a divorce, or a death can reveal to us that we are not nearly as invincible as we lie to ourselves in thinking we are in control. Many people would respond to God if they knew what God was attempting to offer.

10. What is the most frightening part of fishing for others for you?

The simple possibility of rejection in which the other person says, "I don't want to hear about that." Somehow I equate that with failure. Yet every fisherman knows there will be days when you will fish and not catch anything. It has little to do with the skill of the fisherman. It also does not mean the fisherman should stop trying to fish. Too often I confuse fishing with getting a person to make a decision.

Often times it has to do with the will of the fish. We forget that fish do not even know they need to be caught. Some fish go out of their way to avoid being caught.

11. What are the tools we need to go and fish?

In the natural, we need bait, a rod and reel, a net, and a means to get the bait in the water where the fish can be tempted to bite or to enter the area of the net. In the spiritual we need, 1) a relationship to Jesus, 2) some bait to attract the person's attention, 3) some words (parts of the bible or a personal testimony) to direct the person's interest toward God, 4) a place to engage the fish, 5) a willingness to share.

12. Pray for the person next to you, that God will give them a new boldness in seeking opportunities to fish.

Life-Sharing Lesson 2 “Why Care About People: We Can Choose ” Acts 4:5-21

1. If you received a revelation for the cure for leukemia, would you be willing to share it with the world for free? Why?

Yes because people’s lives are at stake. It would bring a lot of joy and hope not only to the person with leukemia but to their families and friends as well.

2. If you received a revelation for the cure for leukemia, would you be willing to share it with the world if you knew that at times people would laugh at you and others would beat you when you tried to give cure to them? Why?

Yes, because even though some would reject it, there would be others who would receive the medicine and be cured. Hopefully those who have rejected the treatment, would learn of what has happened and change their minds and try the treatment.

Acts 4:5-21 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

⁵ The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.”^[a]

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.”

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed

standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it.¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Commentary Material

4:5 The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem.^{NLT} The *rulers, elders, and teachers of religious law* made up the Sanhedrin, or Jewish *council*—the same Council that had condemned Jesus to death ([Luke 22:66](#)). This Council acted as the ruling government of Israel. They handled the local problems and religious questions but had to work under Rome's supervision. For crimes that carried capital punishment, they had to obtain Rome's approval. For instance, the Council had condemned Jesus to death, but it could not carry out the sentence; the Roman leader in the area alone had the authority to order an execution. That is why the religious leaders had taken Jesus to Pilate, the Roman leader in the Jerusalem area ([Luke 23:1](#)).

The Council had seventy members plus the current high priest, who presided over the group. The Sadducees held a majority in this ruling group. These were the wealthy, intellectual, and powerful men of Jerusalem. Jesus' followers stood before this Council, just as he had.

LIFE APPLICATION

RELIGIOUS AND LOST

The men gathered to interrogate Peter and John were a "who's who" of the most powerful and prominent religious leaders of Israel. These men knew the Old Testament Scriptures in painstaking detail. They were completely immersed in a world of religious ritual. They could argue

theology for hours on end. The only problem was, they were spiritually lost! God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had been in their very presence, and they had missed him. Worse than that, they had killed him! Now they were blindly trying to silence the messengers of Christ. Here is a powerful demonstration of the truth that knowing *about* God is not enough. We must know him in a personal way. Until we encounter God through Christ and humbly receive his forgiveness, all our religious acts count for nothing.

4:6 **Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest.**^{NLT} By listing these names, Luke was making the point that opposition to the early church came mostly from the ranks of the Sadducees. In this first trial of the apostles, the powerful Sadducees were well represented. *Annas* had been deposed as high priest by the Romans, who then had appointed *Caiaphas*, Annas's son-in-law, in his place. But because the Jews considered the office of high priest a lifetime position, they still called Annas by that title and gave him respect and authority within the Council. *John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest* were also there, supporting the power base of the high priest's office. (Eventually Annas would arrange for all five of his sons, his son-in-law, and one grandson to be appointed to the office of high priest.) Annas and Caiaphas had played significant roles in Jesus' trial ([John 18:24, 28](#)). It did not please them that the man whom they thought they had sacrificed for the good of the nation ([John 11:49-51](#)) had followers who were just as persistent and who promised to be just as troublesome as he had been.

4:7 **They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"**^{NIV} The Council asked Peter and John *by what power or what name* they had healed the man (see [3:6-7](#)). "By what name" refers to exorcism practices. They wanted to know what formula Peter and John had used. Their concern was more about the apostles' teaching, but they began their questioning with the miracle, for the healed man was there as well ([4:14](#)). The actions and words of Peter and John threatened these religious leaders who, for the most part, were more interested in their reputations and positions than in the glory of God.

4:8-10 **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed."**^{NIV} Jesus had told his disciples, "On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what

to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" ([Matthew 10:18-20](#) NIV). Peter, the rough ex-fisherman, stood before a room of disapproving, scowling faces and, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, began to speak. There are two kinds of courage: reckless courage that is unaware of the dangers it faces, and the courage that knows the peril and yet is undaunted. Peter's boldness is of the latter variety.

Empowered with supernatural boldness by the Holy Spirit, Peter:

- demonstrated respect for his opponents (*rulers and elders of the people*);
- noted with irony his and John's imprisonment for merely having performed *an act of kindness*;
- called attention to the former *cripple* (he had been either imprisoned with the apostles or brought in to testify);
- attributed the man's healing to *the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead*.

In a few words and a matter of seconds, Peter deftly turned the tables and put the Council on trial!

The Greek word *sozo*, translated *healed* in [4:9](#) is translated "to be saved" in [4:12](#). Peter's broad use of the word demonstrated that just as Christ alone is able to restore health physically, so he also is the sole provider of spiritual salvation.

LIFE APPLICATION

TALKING ABOUT JESUS

As you read through the book of Acts, you discover that the apostles spoke about Christ at every opportunity. It was as natural for them to talk about Jesus as it is for us to talk about a day at work or a vacation at the shore. Why? Because they had personal experience with him. That's the most fundamental truth about witnesses—they *communicate* what they have seen and heard. If Christ is real to us, if he's important to us, if he's first in our hearts and minds, we will be like those first-century believers. We won't be able to keep from talking about him. Does your conversation ever feature matter-of-fact references to what God means to you or what he is doing in your life? Jesus said it best: "Whatever is in your heart determines what you say" ([Luke 6:45](#) NLT).

[4:11](#) "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'"^{NKJV} Peter quoted a familiar Old Testament passage—[Psalm](#)

[118:22](#)—and invested it with new meaning. Most Jews regarded their nation, Israel, as the stone chosen by God but rejected by the nations. Here Peter, remembering Christ's own teachings (see [Mark 12:10-11](#); [Luke 20:17](#)), identified Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the chief cornerstone. These "stone" passages (see [Romans 9:30-33](#) and [1 Peter 2:7](#)) were important for establishing the supremacy of Christ in apostolic times. Jesus had referred to himself as the *stone which was rejected by the builders*. The cornerstone was the most important stone in a building, used as the standard to make sure that the other stones of the building were straight and level. Israel's leadership, like the builders looking for an appropriate cornerstone, would toss Jesus aside because he didn't seem to have the right qualifications. They wanted a political king, not a spiritual one. Yet God's plans will not be thwarted. One day the rejected stone will indeed become *the chief cornerstone*, with all the right qualifications, for Jesus will come as King to inaugurate an unending kingdom. He already had begun a spiritual kingdom as the cornerstone of a brand-new "building," the Christian church (see also [1 Peter 2:7](#)). Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection would be the church's foundation.

Peter made it clear that the "builders" were the Jewish religious leaders and that they had rejected the Messiah ("rejected by you builders"). As long as they scorned Christ, their religious efforts to build a nation would be in vain (see [1 Corinthians 3:11-15](#)). They were missing the most important ingredient. Implied in Peter's words was this exhortation: stop rejecting this one who is both Savior and Messiah!

[4:12](#) "There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them."^{NLT} Peter's argument reached a climax. The resurrected Jesus had healed the crippled man physically. That same Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, can heal all people spiritually. Peter did not compromise or soft-pedal his answer. Salvation does not come from being a descendant of Abraham ([Luke 3:8](#)) or by following the law of Moses ([John 6:32-33](#)). The clear gospel teaching is that *there is salvation in no one else* but Jesus ([John 14:6](#); [1 Timothy 2:5](#)). How, then, are people saved? By calling on the name of Jesus. It can't get much simpler than that.

LIFE APPLICATION

ONLY ONE WAY

Many people react negatively to the claim that salvation is found in Christ alone ("There is salvation in no one else!"). "How narrow-minded, exclusive, and arrogant!" is the common charge leveled against Christianity. But two facts are worth remembering: First, this is not something the church arbitrarily decided; it is the specific teaching of Jesus himself ([John 14:6](#)). Second, rather than reacting to the phrase, "in no one

else," people would be better served to focus on the wonderful promise, "There is salvation." *That* is the good news of the gospel! God has provided a way for sinners to be forgiven and granted entrance into eternal life! To be sure, it *is* a narrow way ([Luke 13:24](#)), but it is a way nonetheless. If your cruise ship is sinking, it is foolish to remain on deck criticizing the emergency evacuation plan. The wiser course of action is to take a seat in the nearest lifeboat!

4:13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men who had had no special training. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.^{NLT} Christ had originally chosen the Twelve so that they "might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority" ([Mark 3:14-15](#) NIV). Here that purpose reached fruition. Peter and John, fishermen by trade, had never received formal theological or rhetorical training in the rabbinical schools; they were *ordinary men who had had no special training*. Yet their testimony before *the members of the council* was astonishing. Peter and John were bold, composed, confident, and undaunted in their defense. As the apostles stood there with the healed cripple, speaking with authority, the members of the Council *recognized them as men who had been with Jesus*. Their boldness was possible only because they were filled with the Holy Spirit ([4:8](#); cf. [4:29](#), [31](#); [9:27-28](#); [13:46](#); [14:3](#); [18:26](#); [19:8](#); [26:26](#); [28:31](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

THE DIFFERENCE

Knowing that Peter and John were unschooled, the Council was amazed at what being with Jesus had done for them. Only weeks before, they had been timid, wishy-washy bumbler. Now they were fearless, confident, articulate, and passionate spokesmen. A changed life convinces people of Christ's power. One of your greatest testimonies is the difference others see in your life and attitudes since you have believed in Christ. What are the most obvious changes Christ has brought about in your life?

4:14-15 But since the man who had been healed was standing right there among them, the council had nothing to say. So they sent Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.^{NLT} In the same way that the words and works of Jesus had often left the Jewish leaders speechless ([Mark 12:34](#)), the Council had *nothing to say* in the face of this supernatural healing and preaching.

The *council chamber* was cleared so that the leaders could decide on a course of action.

How Luke knew what went on in this closed discussion has been debated. Possibly a sympathizer among the Council "leaked" the information. Perhaps Gamaliel, a member of the Council, told his student Paul, who later told Luke ([5:34](#); [22:3](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

REJECTING REJECTION

Although the evidence was overwhelming and irrefutable (changed lives and a healed man), the religious leaders refused to believe in Christ and continued to try to suppress the truth. We shouldn't be surprised if some people reject us and our positive witness for Christ. When hearts are hard and minds are closed (blinded by Satan—see [2 Corinthians 4:4](#)), even the clearest and most passionate presentation of the facts won't be heard. But this doesn't mean we should give up. We must pray fervently for those who are opposed to the truth.

[4:16-17](#) "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny they have done a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. But perhaps we can stop them from spreading their propaganda. We'll warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again."^{NLT} The Council was in a quandary. The apostles had performed an undeniable, widely publicized *miraculous sign*. The masses were gravitating toward this new sect. How could the religious leaders save face (in light of the obviously healed man), discourage further teaching and healing in the name of Jesus, and preserve the status quo? Their solution was to order the apostles *not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again*. It seems as though they thought that their power and position could convince these men to be silent. Unfortunately, they completely ignored the miraculous sign and what it meant, preferring instead to attempt to stop the apostles from doing any more such good deeds. There is a certain irony in the Council's forbidding the apostles to speak in Jesus' name, because it was in Jesus' name that the man had been healed.

The trouble with so many people is that the voice of their neighbors sounds louder in their ears than the voice of God.

H. G. Wells

4:18 So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.^{NRSV} Because Peter and John had not broken any laws and were enjoying popular support among the people, the Jewish Council's best attempt at damage control was to summon the apostles and try to scare them into silence with vague warnings. They were simply *ordered . . . not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus*. Jewish law specified that at the first instance of wrong or illegal action, the guilty were to be warned and released. The second time they did wrong, they were to be beaten with rods ([5:28](#), 40). With this official order, the Council would have legal grounds to impose more punishment in the future should the apostles choose to disobey.

LIFE APPLICATION

FEAR IN WITNESSING

Sometimes believers can be afraid to share their faith in Christ, because people might feel uncomfortable and might reject them. In contrast, Peter and John's zeal for the Lord was so strong that they could not keep quiet, even when threatened. If your courage to witness for God has weakened, pray that your boldness may increase. Remember Jesus' promise, "If anyone acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will openly acknowledge that person before my Father in heaven" ([Matthew 10:32](#) NLT).

4:19-20 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."^{NIV} Commanded by Christ to be witnesses ([1:8](#)) and utterly convinced of the truth of the gospel, *Peter and John* announced their rejection of any such ban on speaking in the name of Jesus. In effect, the apostles' response accused the Council of being at odds with the will of God. The apostles already knew the answer, so they asked the Council members to judge for themselves whether they should obey the Council's orders or God's. This principle of obeying God rather than people is a major Christian ethical principle (see commentary at [5:29](#)).

These men had indeed "been with Jesus" ([4:13](#)), and he had completely transformed their lives. They had lived with him; they had witnessed his resurrection; they had experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit. And so they said, "*We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*" To have obeyed the Council's command would have been to disobey God.

LIFE APPLICATION

CREDIBILITY

What if, when threatened by the Sanhedrin, the disciples had abruptly changed their story and curtailed their witness? How credible would the gospel have been after that? The fact that they stood strong in the face of severe persecution gave their message a lot more credibility.

Likewise, when we make the daily decision to do what is right, when we stand up boldly for Christ against a hostile crowd, people take notice.

They look closer at our lives and listen more carefully to our message.

4:21-22 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.^{NIV} Stunned by the courage of Peter and John and fearful of their popularity among the masses, the religious leaders could do nothing more than give *further threats* and then *let them go*. One would think that these "religious" leaders would be thrilled that the people were *praising God for what had happened*. But that was not the case. Luke's parenthetical comment on the man's age heightens the significance of the miracle—the man had been healed of a forty-year-old condition.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts.

3. Why is the crucifixion such an important part of the gospel?

The crucifixion is proof that we are in need of a Savior and that God loves us very much. God was willing to give of Himself for us to be saved because there was nothing we could do to get rid of our sin and be brought back into a relationship with God. God's holiness prevented God from accepting us as we are because sin cannot dwell in the presence of God. The crucifixion brings together the problem of God loving us, but our sin separating us from God.

4. Why is the resurrection such an important part of the gospel?

The resurrection is proof of the power of God to overcome death. The penalty for sin is death. All of us can die in our sin, but we cannot bring ourselves back to life. Jesus took on our sin and died as punishment, but death could not keep

him. The resurrection is proof that our sins were not only fully paid for, but they have been overcome. Because Jesus lives, we shall also live in him, fully reconciled to God just as Jesus has been fully restored to the place He had before the world began.

5. Why do the Scriptures insist that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ?

It is important that the first person to say that Jesus was the only way of Salvation was from Jesus Himself. We find in John 14:6 ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” ⁷ If you really know me, you will know^[a] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” If there were other ways for us to be saved, then the crucifixion instead of being a sacrificial loving act on the part of God, it would have been a cruel and unnecessary event in history. Much of what we find in the New Testament would have to be untrue. There would be no reason to put one’s hope and confidence in God. Paul even writes in 1 Corinthians that if the resurrection had not actually taken place the following:

1 Corinthians 15:14-19 (NIV)

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

We live in a culture that wants everyone to be able to have their own truth and that all truths are equally valid even if they contradict each other. We are tolerant of everybody except those who disagree with being tolerant of everything.

It’s interesting in this passage ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.” People often see the words “found in no one else” that they miss the truth that “salvation has become possible.” God did not have to save any of us, but God chose to make salvation possible. Not only that, the salvation is made available to everyone on

the same terms of choosing to believe in Jesus Christ and what He has done on our behalf.

6. How does a knowledge of Jesus Christ being the only way, tie in with God's desire to make us fishers of people connect to each other?

Knowing who Jesus Christ and what he has done is not going the kind of knowledge that is going to fall out of the sky or someone is going to get from simply looking at nature. God wants to use people to tell other people about Jesus and what Jesus has done for them. The call for us to be fishers of people is God's way of imparting the knowledge of what has happened to other people. The good news of the gospel is only good news when it is shared with those who need to hear it. Jesus being God's way of salvation for all people needs to be shared with all People. That's why we have been invited to become fishers.

7. Do you think the disciples were afraid of the religious leaders in their attempt to fish for people?

The disciples had to have had some fear in their hearts. They had already been thrown into jail for healing a man. They knew what the religious leaders were capable of in condemning innocent people and putting them to death. But their fear did not limit their willingness to be used by God. There are two kinds of courage: reckless courage that is unaware of the dangers it faces, and the courage that knows the peril and yet is undaunted. Peter's boldness is of the latter variety. Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts.

Fear is always going to be a factor in fishing for people, but it is often a lie from the enemy as to what all is going to happen to us. We have to decide to be willing to pay a price in order to rescue people who do not even know they need to be rescued.

8. What did the disciples have in this passage that we may lack?

The disciples had a close connection to Jesus. They had the power of the Holy Spirit working in them so that they even spoke better than they should have been speaking. They were just ordinary people who were willing to take a risk for God. Perhaps we often lack the risk factor in our desire to be used by God. We never really know what God will do or how God will use us unless we are willing to risk failure, disappointment, suffering and pain.

9. How much of the gospel message do we need to know, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ?

God Loves Us. We rejected God because of our sin. God made a way for us to still be saved. God sent his Son to die for our sin. Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. If we believe in Jesus, we receive the life God wants us to have.

10. How much opposition should we expect to receive in sharing our faith? How much is too much.

Jesus told us, we will have tribulations and he told us we would be rejected. He told us even though the harvest is plentiful, there will be those who will reject his message. Yet we are to follow him and continue to be fishers of people. We forget that we are called to give our lives for the cause of Christ if needed, because our lives are not our own. It is obvious from reading ACTS, that some of God's people will die for their faith while in the prime of their lives and ministry. Opposition is not a reason to stop talking about Jesus. In this passage the disciples refuse to stop talking. In the next chapter the opposition will go from verbal threats to actual beating with rods and whips. By chapter 7, they will be killing the saints.

The Story: Iranian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani faces imminent execution for charges of abandoning Islam and refusing to recant his Christian faith, the American Center for Law and Justice [reports](#).

The 34-year-old husband and father of two, whose case was temporarily delayed in December, may now be executed at any moment without warning, according to a new--and apparently final---trial court verdict. Unfortunately, many of the details surrounding the case remain unclear.

The Background: Pastor Nadarkhani's clash with the Iranian government began in 2006 when he was briefly imprisoned on charges of apostasy and evangelism. In 2009 he was arrested for protesting mandated Islamic instruction in his son's school. This charge, however, was soon changed to fit his original "crimes" of apostasy and evangelism.

Nadarkhani was sentenced to death in September 2010 but proceeded to remain alive in prison. In July 2011, his lawyer received a written verdict from the Iranian Supreme Court, which upheld the death sentence yet included a provision for annulment should the pastor recant his faith. In September 2011, the Commission on International Religious Freedom and even President Obama issued statements denouncing Iran's egregious human rights breach and demanding Nadarkhani's immediate release.

Nadarkhani is now approaching 900 days separated from his wife, his two sons, and his church. Nevertheless, God's sustaining grace has enabled him to endure. In a poignant, Scripture-soaked [letter](#) to his congregation dated June 2, 2010, the imprisoned pastor, echoing the apostle Peter, wrote: "[The true believer] does not need to wonder for the fiery trial that has been set on him as though it were something unusual, but it pleases him to participate in Christ's suffering because the believer knows he will rejoice in [Christ's] glory."

11. What would you say Pastor Nadarkhani to encourage him?

“I would ask him, how can I pray for you and your family, and what would you like for me to do.

12. What do you learn about your own faith as you look at Pastor Nadarkhani’s faith.

I may be playing it to safe in my walk with the Lord.

1. Who has been someone in your life that for no apparent reason just chose to invest in you or to love you?

Rev. Francis Miller who was the former pastor of the first church we pastured. He did all that he could to support me and guide me in the early days of my pasturing.

2. Why do you think God chose to love all people in this world?

I think when God created us, God had in mind giving us the best of life to be God's crowning part of creation. God placed some of Himself in us when He created us. There was going to be something special about this two way of love.

John 3:16-21 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ All those who do evil hate the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But those who live by the truth come into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."^{NKJV} The entire gospel comes to a focus in this verse. God's love is not just to a certain group of individuals—it is offered to *the world*.

God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God's actions defined the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone, you are willing to sacrifice dearly for that person. Sacrificial love expresses itself without assurance that the love will be returned in kind. The timing of that love was highlighted by Paul's words, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#) NIV).

Sacrificial love is also practical in seeking ways to meet the needs of those who are loved. In God's case, that love was infinitely practical, since it set out to rescue those who had no hope of

rescuing themselves. God paid dearly to save us; *He gave His only begotten Son*, the highest price he could pay. The term translated "only begotten" (monogene) expresses Jesus' unique value and position as God's only Son. The salvation God offers freely was costly to him.

This offer is made to *whoever believes*. To "believe" is more than intellectual agreement that Jesus is God. It means putting our trust and confidence in him that he alone can save us. It is to put Christ in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting his words as reliable and relying on him for the power to change.

Jesus accepted our punishment and paid the price for our sins so that we would *not perish*. *Perish* does not mean physical death, for we all will eventually die. Here it refers to eternity apart from God. Those who believe will receive the alternative, the new life that Jesus bought for us—*everlasting life* with God.

LIFE APPLICATION

THE CHOICE

[John 3:16](#), along with the rest of the New Testament, assumes that apart from God's intervention, people perish (see [Mark 4:38](#); [Luke 13:3, 5](#); [John 10:28](#); [Romans 2:12](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)). The word adds a sense of hopelessness to the fact of dying—"to perish" is to come to a dead end. In this verse, escape from the tragic fate of perishing is promised to those who believe in God's Son. Instead of perishing, they will have "eternal life," or "life in the ageless age." Perishing is not an end to be desired, for it removes from the picture any vestige of what we could call life. But this verse makes it clear that those who refuse to choose Christ and the life he offers have chosen to perish. Eternal life awaits our decision.

One of the distinctives of John's Gospel is its awareness of the reader. John often includes reflective and explanatory statements that help us understand events more clearly. For instance, in [2:17](#) John explained the insight given to the disciples about Jesus' actions and words in the temple. Further on, in [2:23-24](#), John summarized Jesus' general ongoing relationship with people. As an eyewitness, John wanted us to know not only the facts of God's human visit to earth, but also the eventual lessons and conclusions that came to light from those facts.

With this characteristic of John's Gospel in mind, some commentators have concluded that Jesus' direct speaking stopped with [3:15](#), and that John added the following inspired words ([3:16-21](#)) by way of further explanation. Either way, no other verse in all the Bible so encapsulates the basic message of the gospel: God so dearly loved all the people in the world that he gave his only Son so that we could have eternal life.

LIFE APPLICATION

LIVING FOREVER DOESN'T SOUND SO GREAT . . .

Some people are repulsed by the idea of eternal life because their lives are miserable with pain, hunger, poverty, or disappointment. But eternal life is not an extension of a person's mortal life; eternal life is God's life embodied in Christ given to all believers now as a guarantee that they will live forever. Not only will we be changed, almost everything else will also be changed ([Revelation 21:1-4](#)). In eternal life there is no death, sickness, enemy, evil, or sin. When we don't know Christ, we make choices as though this life is all we have. In reality, this life is just the introduction to eternity. Receive this new life by faith and begin to evaluate all that happens from an eternal perspective.

See Also:

[Chart: All the Greatest](#)

3:17-18 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world."^{NKJV} Why condemn an already condemned world? All people are already under God's judgment because of sin—specifically the sin of not believing in God's Son ([16:9](#)). The only way to escape the condemnation is to believe in Jesus, the Son of God, because he came "**that the world through Him might be saved.**"^{NKJV} He who believes in him is saved from God's judgment. And God *wants* people to believe: He is patient, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#) NKJV).

When we consider ways to communicate the gospel, we should follow Jesus' example. We do not need to condemn unbelievers; they are condemned already. We must tell them about this condemnation, and then offer them the way of salvation—faith in Jesus Christ. When we share the gospel with others, our love must be like Jesus'—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

If I live my life like there is a God,
and find in the end that there isn't,
I have gained much and lost little.
But if I live my life like there isn't a
God, and find out in the end that
there is, I've gained little and lost
everything.

Blaise Pascal

LIFE APPLICATION

GOOD NEWS

The gospel truly is good news! It is not always seen as good news because people are often afraid it is too good to be true. Moments of honest reflection usually confront us with the hopelessness of our lives. We know we are far from perfect. The bad news is so bad that we can hardly stand it. So we try to protect ourselves from our fears by putting our faith in something we do or have: good deeds, skill, intelligence, money, possessions. Since perfection is far out of reach, we are tempted to settle for effort. We end up living barely a step ahead of despair. To those who can see their predicament, the gospel is welcomed good news. Only God can save us from the one thing that we really need to fear—eternal condemnation. We believe in God by recognizing the insufficiency of our own efforts to find salvation and by asking him to do his work in us.

3:19-20 "**This is the judgment.**"^{NRSV} Or "this is how the judgment works" (TEV). What follows describes the grounds for judgment: "**Light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.**"^{NRSV} This is the same conflict between light and darkness that John presented in the prologue ([1:5](#), [9-11](#)). The full arrival of the light in the world signals that God has carried out his plan for the salvation of his creation. *Light has come* means that with the coming of Jesus we have: (1) an absolute source of truth; (2) condemnation of sin; (3) guidance for our daily decisions; and (4) illumination to learn about God more clearly.

What a tragedy that people have turned away from God's offer, embracing instead the darkness in hopes of covering up evil actions. There is probably no more painful moment than when we honestly confront our tendency to love darkness, to twist or withhold the truth. The Son did not come to judge, but in the light of his character the sharp shadows of our sinfulness stand out.

"All who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed."^{NRSV} The people who fear exposure from the light are those who are doing evil. Paul wrote, "Everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible" ([Ephesians 5:13-14](#) NIV). Evil deeds are revealed by the light, so people who want to do evil must do it in the dark so they cannot be caught in the act.

LIFE APPLICATION

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS!

Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what will be revealed or because of the demands the light places on them. They don't particularly want to be changed. We should not be surprised when these same people are threatened by our desire to obey God and do what is right—they are afraid that the light in us may expose some of the darkness in their lives. Rather than giving in to discouragement, we must keep praying that they will come to see how much better it is to live in light than in darkness.

3:21 "But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."^{NRSV} According to the context, to *do what is true* is to come to Christ, the light; the result of coming to the light and living in the light will be clearly seen in believers' lives. Christ's life in us will make our lives able to stand exposure to bright light, for our deeds will be honest, pure, and truthful. John wrote about this at length in [1 John 1:5-7](#).

LIFE APPLICATION

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

Graciously, God does not reveal everything about us that needs changing at once. But as we move toward the light, as our lives become filled with God's presence, we become more aware of sin as well as more aware of the benefits God brings to us. Like people in a dark room when the lights suddenly come on, it takes time for our "eyes" to grow accustomed to seeing. But as Jesus points out later in [16:7-11](#), the presence of the Holy Spirit in us will make us specially sensitive to sin and the need for continued cleansing. Once we are in the light, we must also guard against the temptation to "close our eyes tight" when God is showing us something by the light of his Word ([Psalm 119:105](#)).

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – John.

3. God's love is reaching out unconditionally. Do we want people to come into the church just as they are or do we want them to wait until they clean up their lives a little bit before becoming a part of us?

Although we say come as you are, we do insist on some changes pretty quickly especially when the behavior falls on the borders of what we call sin. We immediately start to tell people to respect the building because it's the house of God, but in reality, we are the temple which is the house of God. Trying to find a balance of welcoming in people, with trying to get to conform as soon as

possible is an ongoing battle. There are some sins people commit that we welcome in a little more than others. A person with a problem of lust is received in quicker than the person with the problem of a foul mouth.

4. How should we handle the situation of a gay male couple choosing to become a part of our congregation?

Theoretically it should be handled the same way as a couple living together should be handled. We have been led to accept one form of sexual sin as being more acceptable than another, in part because we can identify with one being closer to our own nature than another. We should love both couples, but not shy away from teaching the truth in both situations about sexual sin. It is easier for some of us to have a gay/homosexual person in our midst as a single individual than it is to have a gay/homosexual couple. But if we cannot show the love of Christ to them in the context of the truth of the gospel, then who can really do it.

5. When we are sharing the gospel with someone, if they ask “do I have to give up_____ before I give my life to Christ,” what would be your response to that person be?

You do not have to give up anything before giving your life to Christ except a refusal to believe . However when you do give your life to Christ, Christ is going to begin to make changes in you and your lifestyle. That’s the job of the Holy Spirit, to change us from the inside out.

6. Do we truly believe our unsaved loved ones, friends, co-workers and neighbors are going to perish if we don’t accept Jesus’ invitation to become fishers of people?

Sometimes we rather not deal with the issue of whether people who have died have gone to heaven or hell especially those who showed little evidence of giving their lives to Jesus. We sometimes try to escape responsibility by just offering prayer for them.

I'm not sure that we truly believe what the bible teaches about heaven and hell. We do think that good works is going to get some people into the kingdom.

7. Is the emphasis in this passage on the world going to hell, or on God's reaching out to rescue the world?

This passage is emphasizing God's intervention to get people off of the road they are traveling on so that they can experience God's love. God gets know joy from anyone dying without Christ. God has made it as easy as possible for a person to know Him. Salvation is free and is open to all on the same terms. Believe and Receive.

8. Why do you think Christians respond more verbally to a message on the sins of the world and what the lost are doing, than they do to God's call for us as Christians to be involved in rescue work?

It's easier and it makes us look like we are really growing in the word when the emphasis is on those who have not surrendered their lives to Christ. When the emphasis is on us reaching others, it exposes how little we are willing to do to win souls for Christ on a one to one basis.

9. Have you been taking opportunities to fish for people?

I think since the fast and this series, I have been more intentional about looking for places to fish, and praying that God will use me for fishing.

10. What do you think evangelism really is?

Evangelism is taking the steps necessary to move people closer to God. It involves our living and speaking to others about God, about salvation, our church, or our testimony.

11. Using this formula, how could you share the gospel to someone. 1. God Loved. 2. God Gave. 3 We Believe. 4. We Receive.

God loved us very much, but we insisted on rejecting God and making our own decisions. God knew that the price for our rebellion was death and destruction and that we could not do anything about it. God therefore gave His Son Jesus Christ so that we could be forgiven and our sins could be paid for, because the penalty for sin is death. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for the price of our sins. He was buried and rose again from the dead. Because he rose from the dead, he conquered death. All who believe in Jesus and the work He did, can receive the benefit from that work by putting their faith in Christ.

Life-Sharing Lesson 4 “ Why Care About People: Will We Go” Luke 10:1-17

1. If someone invited you to be on a championship team in a field that you enjoyed, why would you consider taking up the offer?

It feels good to be part of a winning team. There are benefits that come from being a champion.

2. What kind of setbacks do championship teams on the way to the championship. The New York Giants this year were the super bowl champions. Yet at the end of the season, there record was 9 wins and 7 losses.

Sometimes they lose games. Sometimes they suffer injuries to players. Sometimes they do not play up to par. Sometimes things happen to team members beyond their control and it affects the teams.

Luke 10:1-17

Today's New International Version (TNIV)

Luke 10

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two^[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ ⁶ If the head of the house loves peace, your peace will rest on that house; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for workers deserve their wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom

of God has come near.’¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.”^[b]

¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

JESUS SENDS OUT SEVENTY-TWO MESSENGERS / [10:1-16](#) / [130](#)

Luke is the only Gospel to record the sending out of seventy-two disciples. In this passage, Luke highlighted and anticipated the universal mission of Jesus—that the gospel would go to all people. Prior to this time, Jesus limited his mission to the Jews. The mission for Christians today is the same as for the seventy-two people who gathered around Jesus two thousand years ago. We must tell others about the coming of God's kingdom, the coming of Jesus to the world to save sinners. While Jesus' mission was to Israel, the mission of today's church encompasses the entire world, reaching out to all groups of people.

[10:1](#) The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit.^{NLT} Far more than twelve people had been following Jesus. According to [1 Corinthians 15:6](#), Jesus had at least five hundred followers by the time he had finished his ministry. A group of 120 of these followers went to Jerusalem to begin the church there ([Acts 1:15](#)). Here Jesus designated a group of seventy-two to prepare a number of towns for his later visit. Even though Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, knowing that death awaited him there, he did not stop his ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God. As the Twelve had been sent out ([9:1-6](#)), so now Jesus *chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead*. Their ministry was much like that of the Twelve, preparing *the towns and villages* that Jesus was planning to visit.

The number "72" is found in the earliest Greek manuscripts. This number is significant for it was, according to [Genesis 10](#), the traditional number of nations in the world, according to the Septuagint. Other Greek manuscripts read "70." This alternative reading may have been influenced by the Hebrew Old Testament, which lists seventy names in [Genesis 10](#). By choosing and sending out seventy-two disciples, Jesus was symbolically showing that all nations in the world would one day hear the message. This would include the Gentiles—an important point for Luke's Gentile audience.

These disciples were not unique in their qualifications. They were not better educated, more capable, or of higher status than other followers of Jesus. What equipped the seventy-two for this mission was their awareness of Jesus' power and their vision to reach all the people. Christians should dedicate their skills to God's kingdom, but they should also be equipped with his power and have a clear vision of what he wants them to do.

LIFE APPLICATION

THE VISION

While some disciples stayed back, these seventy-two went ahead to prepare for Jesus' visit to several towns. It was their turn to serve as missionaries, and no doubt their excitement was high. But most important, they were going in God's strength and with God's message. When you "go out"—to build schools, help with kids' camp, or whatever—go in prayer, trusting God for strength, to help people find their Savior.

[10:2](#) 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."^{NRSV} Jesus was sending thirty-six teams of two to reach the many towns and villages that he had not yet been able to visit. Jesus compared this work to a *harvest*—the gathering of new believers into his kingdom (see also [John 4:35](#)). To have a harvest, however, one must have *laborers* in the field. So many people need to hear the message ("the harvest is plentiful"), but there are so few laborers willing to gather it in ("the laborers are few"). Even as Jesus had sent the Twelve, and now seventy-two more, he told them to *ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest*. These laborers should pray for more laborers—pray for more people to be willing to work in the harvest. In Christian service, there is no unemployment. God has work enough for everyone. No believer should sit back and watch others work because the harvest is great.

[10:3](#) "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."^{NIV} The world into which these seventy-two were going was not a pleasant place. The harvest was going to involve intensive labor and possibly danger. Jesus commanded them to *go*, explaining that they were going out *like lambs among wolves*. The use of the word "lambs" refers to their vulnerability (see [Isaiah 11:6](#); [65:25](#) where the image is also used). Just as Israel was a lamb among the hostile Gentile nations in the Old Testament, so the disciples would be in a hostile setting. But most important are the four words *I am sending you*. If Jesus were not sending them, then they would be attempting to go on their own plans, their own power, their own itinerary; being lambs among wolves would be like asking to be slaughtered. But because Jesus was sending them, they might

face danger from the opposition. Their very defenselessness would cause them all the more to depend on God.

LIFE APPLICATION

ROOKIE MISSIONARY

Jesus encouraged the disciples not just to do the work but also to pray for workers. Part of every missionary's job is to pray for new workers and to help newcomers learn the ropes. Whatever your role in God's work, pray today for more helpers. Believers are not always to work alone. God wants them to pray, recruit, and equip others to join them as they explore opportunities to serve Jesus. Some people, as soon as they understand the gospel, want to go to convert people immediately. Jesus gave a different approach: begin by mobilizing people to pray. And before praying for unsaved people, pray that other concerned disciples will join you in reaching out to them. God will lead you to an important responsibility, but prayer comes first.

[10:4](#) "Don't take along any money, or a traveler's bag, or even an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road."^{NLT} These instructions are basically the same as those given to the Twelve in [9:3-4](#). The reason was the same—they were to travel light, spend no time preparing for the trip, and depend upon God and those to whom they ministered to meet their basic needs. Going without *money, traveler's bag, or even an extra pair of sandals* would seemingly make them that much more vulnerable to the "wolves" ([10:3](#)), but they are to trust God completely. So urgent is their task that they are not to *stop to greet anyone on the road*. Jesus did not mean for them to be impolite to people whom they passed, but rather that they were not to spend precious time on dallying by the wayside. They had to remain focused on their task (see also [2 Kings 4:29](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

WOLVES

Jesus warned against opposition. Wolfish opposition comes in many forms. Some spiritual opponents will aggressively attack all religion, especially religion that respects patience, meekness, and chastity. Some opponents will appear to be spiritual, even more than you are.

Serving God today requires courage under fire and discernment among counterfeits.

Pray for growth in both virtues. Find a way to become better educated about the opposition you face.

10:5-6 "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you."^{NRSV} The house that a pair of disciples would *enter* would be the home from which they would receive hospitality during their stay in a particular town. When they entered a house, they should give the characteristic greeting of *peace*. But this greeting conveyed much more. It represented the messianic peace promised in the Old Testament and stressed the authority based on power from God that was behind the missionary. If the householder was one *who shares in peace* (a person who had a proper attitude toward God), then the greeting of *peace will rest on that person*. Such a person will be open to the gospel message. But if the person did not "share in peace," then he or she would not be open to the gospel message; so the greeting *will return to* the one who had given it. God's blessing of peace will return so that it can be redirected to those who will appreciate it.

10:7 "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."^{NRSV} Jesus had also directed the Twelve to remain with their original hosts in any town ([9:4](#)). This instruction avoided certain problems. For the two disciples to *move about from house to house* could offend the families who first took them in. Some families might begin to compete for the disciples' presence, and some might think they weren't good enough to hear their message. This instruction would also keep them from sin caused by always looking for a better deal. If the disciples appeared not to appreciate the hospitality offered them, the town might not accept Jesus when he followed them there. In addition, by staying in one place, the disciples would not have to worry continually about getting good accommodations. They could settle down and do their appointed task.

In addition, the disciples should willingly eat and drink what their hosts provided, *for the laborer deserves to be paid*. Jesus told his disciples to accept hospitality graciously because their work entitled them to it. Ministers of the gospel deserve to be supported, and it is believers' responsibility to make sure they have what they need. There are several ways to encourage those who serve God in his church. First, see that they have an adequate salary. Second, see that they are supported emotionally; plan a time to express appreciation for something they have done. Third, lift their spirits with special surprises from time to time. Ministers deserve to know that believers are giving to them cheerfully and generously. (See [1 Corinthians 9:3-18](#); [1 Timothy 5:18](#); [3 John 5-8](#).)

10:8-9 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'"^{NIV} When the pairs of disciples entered a town, received a *welcome*, and entered a home, Jesus told them to *eat what is set before* them. It may well be that they would be welcomed into non-Jewish homes where the

meals might not satisfy all the ceremonial laws of the Jews. Jesus told them not to be sidetracked about what they ate. Instead, they should do what they came to do—*heal the sick* (which was a signal that the kingdom had arrived) and proclaim to the people that *the kingdom of God is near* (see also [10:11](#); [21:31](#)). This "nearness" meant both "already here" and "soon to come." The kingdom Jesus began on earth would not overthrow Roman oppression and bring universal peace right away. Instead, it was a kingdom that began in people's hearts and was as near as people's willingness to make Jesus king over their lives. One day Christ will return to set up his eternal kingdom on earth—it may still be many years away, but it is certain to come, and it is as near as accepting Jesus' sacrifice for salvation.

LIFE APPLICATION

MISSIONARIES AND MONEY

Should missionaries ask for money? Should pastors consider salary when thinking about a move?

Simple faith and single-minded intensity are the twin foci of this verse, not poverty or discourtesy. Disciples must trust God for their needs and be devoted to their mission.

Pastors usually try to live on a middle-range income appropriate to the church they serve. Missionaries, on the other hand, are normally considered rich by virtue of their having shoes on their feet and books in their home. In neither case must wealth be a motive. Serve God with a blind eye to financial gain.

[10:10-11](#) "But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.'"^{NIV} Jesus also gave instructions if the disciples should enter a town and not be welcomed. He made it clear that they would face rejection in some places. But the rejection of their message would not change the message. Even if the people refused it, the kingdom of God was still near, but those who refused it would miss it. Jesus repeated the instruction of shaking the dust of that town from their feet "as a testimony against them" ([9:5](#)).

[10:12](#) "The truth is, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on the judgment day."^{NLT} Sodom was a *wicked* city that God destroyed because of its great sinfulness ([Genesis 19:24-28](#)). The city's name is often used to symbolize evil and immorality. Sodom will face God's wrath at Judgment Day, but cities that rejected the Messiah and his kingdom will face even worse wrath from God. A city as evil as Sodom would be *better off . . . on the judgment day* than these towns because they had been given the opportunity to believe the

Messiah—they had seen great miracles and had the Good News preached to them—but they had turned away and had refused salvation. Their punishment would be severe.

LIFE APPLICATION

AMAZING AUTHORITY

If respect goes to doctors and professors . . .

If wealth goes to corporate chiefs and lawyers . . .

If fame goes to sports and entertainment headlines . . .

What do evangelists get?

They get a message—

the telling of which means eternal life,

the rejecting of which separates from God forever,

and there's no middle ground.

If ever a job was important,

needed doing, makes a difference—

here it is.

Your privilege and responsibility. Tell the message.

[10:13-14](#) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you."^{NRSV} The word "woe" expresses deep sorrow as well as coming judgment ([6:24](#)). The mention of cities that might reject the Messiah ([10:10-11](#)) leads to a message of those who already had. *Chorazin* (also spelled Korazin) and *Bethsaida* were cities near Capernaum, at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had concentrated his ministry in and around Capernaum, so he must have performed miracles in these cities (*deeds of power*). These miracles are not recorded in the Gospels—there is much about Jesus' ministry that is unknown. *Tyre and Sidon* were pagan cities in Phoenicia, the territory north of Galilee. They had rebelled against God and had been judged and punished for their wickedness and opposition to God's people (see [Isaiah 23:1-18](#); [Jeremiah 25:22](#); [47:4](#); [Ezekiel 26–28](#); [Joel 3:4-8](#); [Amos 1:9-10](#)). Yet Jesus explained that, though these people were evil and rebellious, if he had come to them and had done miracles, *they would have repented long ago*. The mention of *sackcloth and ashes* depicts mourning and repentance. A person humbled himself or herself by wearing only this rough cloth made of goat hair and sitting in a pile of ashes. Tyre and Sidon had not had that opportunity, while Chorazin and Bethsaida had been visited by the Messiah, who had done miracles among them; yet they rejected him. The punishment these cities would suffer *at the judgment* would be far worse than what Tyre and Sidon experienced.

10:15 "And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths."^{NIV} Capernaum was Jesus' base for his Galilean ministry ([Matthew 4:13](#); [Mark 2:1](#)). The city was located at an important crossroads used by traders and the Roman army, so a message proclaimed in Capernaum was likely to go far. Jesus had performed many miracles there, and apparently the people were feeling a certain amount of pride in their connection with Jesus. But many people of Capernaum did not understand Jesus' miracles or believe his teaching. Instead of being *lifted up to the skies* as they might have thought because Jesus chose to live among them, they would *go down to the depths* because they had seen the Messiah and rejected him. The language is reminiscent of [Isaiah 14:12-15](#) where the prideful attitude of the king of Babylon is condemned. The Greek word translated "to the depths" is Hades, which is the opposite of heaven. Hades is the dwelling place of the condemned wicked people ([16:23](#); [Revelation 20:13-14](#)), so it implied fiery judgment on this city that rejected Christ. Today the site of ancient Capernaum is desolate—a stunning picture of Jesus' words here.

10:16 Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God who sent me."^{NLT} Jesus' messengers are important people. They are sent with authority. In ancient times, when a person dealt with a messenger, it was the same as dealing with the person who had sent him (for example, see [7:3](#) and commentary). Therefore, people who accepted the message of Jesus' disciples were accepting Jesus. Likewise, people who rejected Jesus' disciples' message were rejecting Jesus. Because Jesus and God are one—*anyone who rejects [Jesus] is rejecting God* who sent him. These messengers could take their mission seriously because Jesus did—he was sending them out with his message and his authority.

THE SEVENTY-TWO MESSENGERS RETURN / [10:17-24](#) / [131](#)

This passage continues the theme of discipleship (started at [9:51](#)). Here the seventy-two returned, rejoicing. Jesus rejoiced with them, praising God for the defeat of Satan and the fact that he had chosen to use these humble followers to advance his kingdom.

In the middle of this celebration, however, Jesus issued a strong warning: Don't take pride in what you have done or what God has done through you. Instead, rejoice in the fact that God has chosen you and has given you eternal life.

It is easy to start taking pride in your own accomplishments. But Jesus warns you to be careful not to forget from whom your abilities and strength come. Praise and gratitude always belong to God.

10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."^{NIV} Some time had passed between [10:16](#) and [10:17](#). The seventy-two disciples completed their mission to various towns and villages ([10:1](#)) and *returned with joy*. They had seen tremendous results as they ministered in Jesus' name and with his authority. They were elated by the victories they had witnessed—that even the demons had submitted to them in Jesus' name. Probably they were able to heal demon-possessed people, and this thrilled them.

Jesus shared their enthusiasm. He helped them get their priorities right, however, by reminding them of their most important victory—that their names were written in heaven ([10:20](#)). This honor was more important than any of their accomplishments. As we see God's wonders at work in and through us, we should not lose sight of the greatest wonder of all—our heavenly citizenship.

[10:18-19](#) He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."^{NIV} The disciples noted in particular that demons had submitted to Jesus' authority through them ([10:17](#)). Jesus' reply is mysterious but may be understood in a couple of ways. It could be that Jesus *saw*, as in a vision, Satan falling *like lightning from heaven* (that is, from a place of power) during the ministry of these disciples—Satan suffered a notable defeat as these thirty-six pairs of men went around the countryside casting out demons.

Another view is that Jesus had seen his ultimate victory over Satan at the cross. [John 12:31-32](#) indicates that Satan would be judged and driven out at the time of Jesus' death.

A third view says that Jesus was telling of the fall of Satan and was warning his disciples against pride. Perhaps he was referring to [Isaiah 14:12-17](#), which begins, "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!" (NIV). Some interpreters identify this verse with Satan and explain that Satan's pride led to his fall. Thus, some conclude that Jesus may have been giving this stern warning: "Your pride is the kind that led to Satan's downfall. Be careful!"

The first view is most preferred. Satan might attempt what he could to discourage and harm Jesus' disciples, but when they were on this mission, nothing could harm them. Jesus had given them *authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy*. This may allude to [Psalm 91:13](#) where snakes are listed among dangerous creatures from which God protects the people of Israel. See also [Deuteronomy 8:15](#)

where scorpions and snakes are connected. Indeed, nothing could harm them. They would be on a special mission with special protection.

The Devil's best ruse is to persuade us that he does not exist.

Charles Baudelaire

[10:20](#) "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."^{NKJV} Such power and authority can be a heady experience, so the disciples were warned not to rejoice in their mission and their accomplishments and the fact that the evil spirits submitted to them ([10:17](#)). The only reason to rejoice, Jesus explained, is that *your names are written in heaven*. Their ministry was not to become an experience of power leading to pride, but an experience of servanthood out of love for God and out of the desire for more people to join them in the kingdom, more names "written in heaven." (See also [Exodus 32:32-33](#); [Daniel 12:1](#); [Malachi 3:16](#); [Hebrews 12:23](#); [Revelation 3:5](#); [20:12-15](#).)

LIFE APPLICATION

JUST BECAUSE . . .

Much of what's done for Christ seeks results and rewards. Of all that you do, what matters for its own sake and doesn't need any further reward?

. . . Students study hard to get grades to get . . . what?

. . . Workers put in overtime to make money to get . . . what?

. . . Disciples serve God . . . for what?

The Bible tells of just a few steps God's people ought to take just because they please God: loving people, keeping promises, worshiping, telling others about Jesus. Can you add any? In all of your efforts for Christ, take time to thank God that you have eternal life.

10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."^{NIV} The seventy-two disciples returned, full of joy at what God was doing ([10:17](#)). Jesus shared this joy and praised God, for he could see God decisively at work—the effective ministry of the seventy-two disciples underscored this fact. Jesus praised God, his *Father* who was also *Lord of heaven and earth*, for making spiritual truth available to the *little children*. Those who willingly submit themselves to God and do not depend upon their own wisdom will have the truth *revealed* to them. While many of life's rewards seem to go to the intelligent, the rich, the good-looking, or the powerful, the kingdom of God is equally available to all, regardless of position or abilities. Yet so often *the wise and learned* in this world refuse to submit themselves to God. They may not see their need for him, or they may think that their wisdom and learning have placed them in a separate class. These words of Jesus reveal God's sovereignty and initiative regarding who will receive divine truth. God has chosen to hide it from those who refuse and reject it (see [8:10](#)), and instead reveals it to those who may not seem wise and learned but have trusting hearts (like little children, 9:47-48).

LIFE APPLICATION

GOD'S CHOICE: YOU

How did you come to know about God? A typical Christian will answer: through reading the Bible or because someone witnessed to me. But the deeper reason (the explanation behind those immediate reasons) is that God chose you to know about

himself.

Why would God do that? Not because you're so kind to animals or anything else commendable. It was by grace, a gift entirely based on love from God to you.

What should you do? Thank God in prayer; live each day for God; speak about God; and show God's love in generous concern for others. A great gift inspires a grateful response.

10:22 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."^{NIV} Jesus further identified his special and unique relationship with God the Father. So close and intimate, so completely trusting, that Jesus said, "*All things have been committed to me by my Father.*" That is why Jesus spoke with such authority (4:32) and why he has absolute power over nature, demons, sickness, and death. The Father and the Son have an exclusive relationship that humanity at large cannot fathom. (Luke brought it up again in 20:41-44; 22:69; Acts 2:29-38.) However, Jesus did reveal God to some. His mission was to reveal God the Father to people. His words brought salvation down to earth. He explained God's love through parables, teachings, and, most of all, his life. By examining Jesus' actions, principles, and attitudes, those chosen by him are enabled to understand God more clearly. As used here, the word "chooses" does not refer to predestination; rather, it refers to Jesus' divine status and authority to reveal saving knowledge to people. Only through Jesus can people come to know God; Jesus alone is our mediator; he is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6 NKJV). (See also John 10:15; 17:2.)

10:23-24 Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."^{NRSV} Old Testament men of God such as David and the prophet Isaiah made many God-inspired predictions that Jesus fulfilled. As Peter later would write, these prophets wondered what their words meant and when they would be fulfilled (1 Peter 1:10-13). In Jesus' words, they *desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it*. Despite their privileged positions as part of God's people and God's plan, many *prophets and kings* were not as blessed as this little band of disciples or all the "simple" people who came in faith to Jesus.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Luke.

3. What's the value in Jesus sending out the disciples in groups of two's?

4. Several times in Scripture Jesus says the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few? Why do you think this is the case?

5. How often do you pray, “Lord send out workers into the harvest field.” Why do you pray that often?

6. We have looked at two images for reaching people for Christ. The first has been going fishing and the second has been going in the harvest field. Which image works best for you?

7. Do you think the disciples were afraid when Jesus said he was sending them out like lambs among wolves? Just a few moments earlier, Jesus had said, “the harvest is plentiful.” Why is Jesus giving a mixed signal here?

8. What does it mean for us to tell people that the kingdom of God has come near to them?

9. What is to be our goal in witnessing to people, and why should we see witnessing as a passing of a baton?

10. What does it mean to say that evangelism is not an event, but rather a lifestyle.

11. Moving From Discussion To Action

Could You Do This With Another Person For This Easter Season

1. Knock On A Door & Wait With A Smile
2. Take A Couple Of Steps Back From The Door (So person answering does not feel crowded)
3. Hi there, We're from Glenville New Life Community Church/Calvary Presbyterian Church. Just wanted to let you that we're down the street. We're in the neighborhood to see if you or your family have any prayer requests for us to take back to the church? (Listen & Record)
4. Is there anything we could pray with you for now?
5. May we leave this free gift bag with you which may help you in the future?
6. Is there something you think our church could do or offer to be more helpful in the community?
7. If you're not attending a church, we want you to know that you are always welcome to attend our services at 8:30 or 11:15/or at 11. We have a special event taking place at the church on_____

You don't have to enter a house unless you are invited in. You never enter the house alone without your partner. You pray as you are walking up to the house. You pray again as you leave. Your results may astound you even as the disciples were amazed.