

## THE BENEFITS OF PACKING LIGHTLY

(Part 1---Luke 10:1-4)

If you have ever gone on a vacation or trip somewhere, you are well aware of all the preparations you have to make before you go.

- If you are going to a foreign country, you need to get a **visa** to show to customs whenever you enter a foreign country's borders.
- If you are flying rather than driving, you will need **airline tickets** and you will need to figure out how you will get to the airport and back.
- If you have a **dog**, you will have to get someone to care for it. If your dog is old, you will have to get its meds and special diet information to the caretaker.
- You will also need to make **hotel reservations** in any of the different cities you will be staying in.
- If you are in country and you need to take a **train** from city to city, you will need to get tickets for each of those trips.
- You will need to make a **list of everything** you need to take with you---shoes, clothes, medicine, vitamins, glasses, contacts, contact case, contact solution, backup contacts, shampoo, brushes, combs, sunglasses—the list goes on and on and on. On top of that, you will **need to limit** how many bags you fill with your stuff or the airlines will charge you for extra bags.
- And once you have made your list, you will **need to pack** (ugg!).

You will spend *hours* and *hours* of time getting everything ready ... but one day, it will be time for you to go. Your hard work will be worth it---especially when you pack lightly---because you will enjoy your vacation and all the beautiful sites you have looked forward to seeing much more.

In the two passages we have been studying this past month (Luke 9 & 10), Jesus helped both the 12 apostles in Luke 9 and the 70 in Luke 10 to pack for the journey He was sending them on. And like American Airlines does with extra baggage, the Lord puts some limits on them as well.

**Luke 9:3** And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece."

**Luke 10:1-4** After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup> Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. <sup>3</sup> Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road."

The Lord makes it easy. He helps the 70 pack for the mission by telling them not to take *anything* and not to speak with anyone on the way to the place where they would do their work.

Now why would Luke include such seemingly trivial instructions in both Luke 9 and 10?

Well, even though the Bible doesn't tell us why, these instructions **concerning what the 70 are not to take with them** most likely had something to do with their success once they got out on their mission.

There were things they were going to need to leave behind because, on this trip, they were going on a mission for Christ and NOT your typical vacation.

**And because our Lord desires for us** to not only **carry His love and grace** to this hurting world, but ALSO to **have success in doing it**, I would like us to consider the benefits that come to us as we leave certain things behind and trust in His help and strength for the task.

And that is what I would like to speak to you about for a few minutes this morning.

**Title:** The Benefits of Packing Lightly

(Prayer)

**Most anyone who has ever moved** to a new home at one point or another knows the challenge of trying to pack the most items possible into a car, van, or moving truck. If space runs out on the inside of the vehicle, one or two things can often be carefully strapped to the top. In June of 2017, however, **a New Hampshire driver** took some liberty with the space on top of his van, stacking up a dangerously large pile of personal belongings. This did not amuse NH state troopers. The vehicle was pulled over, ticketed, and towed to prevent a QUOTE "potential accident from occurring." The driver was also ticketed for "negligible driving."

**Last Sunday**, we saw that Jesus told his disciples that He was sending them out as lambs among wolves. Then He gives them some additional instructions: "As you go out for Me, there are certain items that I don't want to you to carry--**don't carry any money, don't carry a bag** for personal items or provisions, and don't bother to carry an extra pair of **sandals**."

It's interesting to me that the apostle Luke wrote down the things Jesus told the 70 **NOT** to take as opposed to what they should take. Jesus knew that on the journey He was sending these people on, **these items would be a hindrance to their success and not a help.**

I have two main lessons for us today:

1. **If we are to be redemptive in our relationships with the unsaved, there will be things that our Lord asks us to leave behind.**

In other words, our effectiveness as witnesses for God has a lot to do with what we take along and what we leave behind.

In Luke 9, they couldn't take staves, bags, bread, money, or an extra robe. In Luke 10 they couldn't take extra sandals either.

What were these things? Security blankets! If you don't have food and you don't have money to buy food, **you have rely on others**. If you don't have money, you can't buy a hotel room.

The issue here was not food, money and clothes but **what would happen if the disciples trusted in their own resources.**

By telling them to leave these things behind, Jesus was teaching them to rely on God and what He would provide once they got out. It made them hit their knees in prayer. And it reminded them to focus on building relationships with other people instead of staying in the proverbial "holy huddle."

Effective evangelism leaves security blankets at home. So first of all, if we are to be redemptive in our relationships with the unsaved, there will be things that our Lord asks us to leave behind.

2. **When we "leave things behind" [and by that, I mean, when we quit trusting in our own strength and resources] and begin to trust in God, it helps us become more:**

#### **A. Humble**

Once Jesus told them to go out without food and money, His people found themselves in a situation in which they would have to depend on others. (Brings a serious attitude adjustment.)

Now, as they entered a neighborhood, instead of entering with a **"Man, do you pagans ever need the message I have for you,"** they might be thinking more like this, **"God, I am trusting in you to help me find, not only some people to talk to, but also, some people who can help this penniless, hungry servant of God."**

So what our Lord was trying to impress on His people was that, **when it comes to outreach, attitude** is just as important as **aptitude**. Yes, depending on God and others

is humbling, but it is humble people that God can use, not those who look down on people.

## **B. Genuine**

The Bible calls those of us who are saved earthen vessels (or, “clay pots”). 2 Cor 4:7 says:

**2 Corinthians 4:7** ...We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

Jesus is the treasure we possess---we also have His good news of grace. We are simple clay pots with marvelous treasure in them. But do you know what a lot of believers think? They think they need to impress others to bring them to Christ.

But the truth of the matter is what brings people to Christ is not how **shiny** the clay pot is but how well people can see the beautiful treasure in that pot!

So we don't need to impress people---if we are genuine and simply let the love and message of Christ touch their lives, that is all we need.

Now the third blessing.

When we're willing to leave things behind that hinder us, and begin to rely on God alone for success, it helps us become more:

## **C. Realistic**

As the 70 went out to minister, they didn't take poster boards, bumper stickers, gospel blimps, or anything else like that.

Being realistic means that we understand that reaching a lost person for Christ is a difficult, time-consuming, and costly struggle.

Wouldn't it be great if all we had to do to reach people is put a billboard in the yard that says: **“If you want eternal life, come on Sunday at 10:30 and learn how.”** Wouldn't that be easy? Sure it would, but we all know that a million people a year will drive by and ignore it.

**As clever and thought provoking** as the black billboards that went up around the metroplex a couple of years ago, I wonder how many unsaved people came to Christ

through them. The man spent millions on them. That would be interesting to know.

Being realistic means remembering that harvesting the Lord's field is hard work, and that **no gimmick or gizmo** can replace loving, serving, and caring for another in the name of Christ. **Nothing.**

Leaving things behind and trusting in God makes us humble, genuine, and realistic.

I've got several other characteristics to share with you, but we'll talk about those in an upcoming message.

In closing, the writer of Hebrews told us about people who did what Jesus was talking about here. **Hebrews 11 is full of people who laid aside the things that hindered them and put their faith completely in God to use them according to His plans.**

And in Hebrews 12 the writer says of them:

**Hebrews 12:1-2a** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us,** and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith...

We will fail our God as His witnesses if we fail to...

1. Lay aside every weight
2. Lay aside the sin which so easily ensnares us  
(= unbelief) "If you think you can't, you're right!"
3. Run God's race with endurance (it is a marathon)
4. Look unto Jesus for everything in faith!  
("Without God, we can't! Without us, He won't!")

What is hindering **you**?

What is weighing **you down** from being the witness God wants you to be?

One Sunday afternoon, a Christian man and his five-year-old son were driving past a cemetery. When the five-year old **noticed a large pile of dirt beside a newly excavated grave**, he pointed at it and said: **"Look, Dad, one got out!"**

(2000 years ago, with enormous power "one got out" and that same power is available to us today!)