

The Joy of the Mission

Alma Cho · Luke · Luke 10:1-12; Luke 10:13-15; Luke 10:16; Luke 10:17-24

AT A GLANCE

Alma Cho reads Jesus's sending of the 72 in Luke 10 as an invitation to ordinary, imperfect believers rather than trained specialists: the mission carries real risk of opposition and rejection, but its outcome is not ours to secure. What surprises is the ending—joy, not exhaustion—because the mission's reward is not measurable results but the reminder that we are already loved and known by the one who sends us.

- Jesus sends committed followers, not trained specialists—the 72 qualify by knowing him, not by expertise or readiness.
- Jesus warns in advance of opposition and mixed reception so his people can go out expectant rather than naive or blindsided.
- The mission's joy comes not from visible success but from being reminded that our names are written in heaven.

“Maybe this joy that is a result of the mission of sharing our faith actually comes from being reminded of our own belovedness.”

EXPOSITION

Scripture engaged

Luke 10:1-12 — After this, the Lord chose 72 more followers. He sent them out in groups of two. He sent them ahead of him into every town and place where he planned to go. He said to them, “There is such a big harvest of people to bring in. But there are only a few workers to help harvest them. God owns the harvest. Ask him to send more workers to help bring in his harvest. You can go now. But listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. Don’t carry any money, a bag, or sandals. Don’t stop to talk with people on the road. Before you go into a house, say, ‘Peace be with this home.’ If the people living there love peace, your blessing of peace will stay with them. But if not, your blessing of peace will come back to you. Stay in the peace-loving house. Eat and drink what the people there give you. A worker should be given his pay. Don’t leave that house to stay in another house. If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat the food they give you. Heal the sick people who live there, and tell them, ‘God’s kingdom is now very near you!’ But if you go into a town and the people don’t welcome you, then go out into the streets of that town and say,

‘Even the dirt from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But remember that God’s kingdom is coming soon.’ I tell you, on the judgment day it will be worse for the people of that town than for the people of Sodom.” (ERV)

Luke 10:13-15 — “It will be bad for you, Chorazin! It will be bad for you, Bethsaida! I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon, then the people in those cities would have changed their lives and stopped sinning a long time ago. They would have worn sackcloth and sat in ashes to show that they were sorry for their sins. But on the judgment day it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to the place of death!” (ERV)

Luke 10:16 — “When anyone listens to you my followers, they are really listening to me. But when anyone refuses to accept you, they are really refusing to accept me. And when anyone refuses to accept me, they are refusing to accept the one who sent me.” (ERV)

Luke 10:17-24 — When the 72 followers came back from their trip, they were very happy. They said, “Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we used your name!” Jesus said to them, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from the sky. He is the enemy, but know that I have given you more power than he has. I have given you power to crush his snakes and scorpions under your feet. Nothing will hurt you. Yes, even the spirits obey you. And you can be happy, not because you have this power, but because your names are written in heaven.” Then the Holy Spirit made Jesus feel very happy. Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I am thankful that you have hidden these things from those who are so wise and so smart. But you have shown them to people who are like little children. Yes, Father, you did this because it’s what you really wanted to do. My Father has given me all things. No one knows who the Son is—only the Father knows. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people who will know about the Father are those the Son chooses to tell.” Then Jesus turned to his followers. They were there alone with him. He said, “It is a great blessing for you to see what you now see! I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you now see, but they could not. And they wanted to hear what you now hear, but they could not.” (ERV)

The argument

Being Sent Is a Privilege, Not a Burden We're Unfit For — Reframing the fear that we lack training for the mission

Alma Cho opens by naming the common feeling of inadequacy before ever turning to the text: “we don't feel adequate, we don't feel trained, we don't feel equipped, we don't feel fit.” She points out that the 72 sent out in Luke 10 are not specialists but ordinary followers who “have spent time with him,” trusted to keep learning as they obey. She notes the number 72 may echo the 72 nations listed in Genesis 10, making this sending a preview of a mission to the whole earth—and placing every believer inside that same company. Jesus deploys committed followers, not trained agents, which reframes being sent as an ordinary privilege rather than a specialist's burden.

Insight — Feeling untrained is not disqualification; Jesus sends people who know him, not people who are experts.

Jesus Sets Right Expectations Rather Than Hype — Naming the size of the need, the certainty of opposition, and the reality of mixed reception before anyone leaves

Alma Cho observes that Jesus previews exactly what the 72 will face: "he doesn't send them out blind and unprepared. He doesn't hype them up to some reality that's not going to be true." The harvest is plentiful but laborers are few, so the first of the ten imperatives in verses 1-12 is prayer. They go as "lambs in the midst of wolves," expecting resistance, and they are told in advance how to handle both welcome and rejection. Nothing is oversold; the mission is hard, dependent, and not guaranteed to succeed in every house or town, and Jesus says so plainly before sending anyone out.

Insight — Honest expectation-setting, not hype, is what sustains people through resistance.

The Woe Oracles Mark a Narrow Window of Urgent Opportunity — Access to Jesus, not distance from him, is what makes rejection so costly

Turning to the woes against Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Alma Cho explains that Jesus adopts the prophetic "woe oracle," a form used "to provoke the listeners to consider their guilt before it's too late... a call to repentance." These familiar Galilean towns fare worse than Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon—history's byword for wickedness—because they had Jesus himself among them and still rejected him. Yet she insists this is not final judgment: "it's not yet time for judgment... it's a window time right now," the same patience Jesus showed James and John when they wanted to call down fire on a rejecting village.

Insight — Nearness to Jesus raises the stakes of our response, and every warning exists to invite return while there is still time.

An Agent Is Defined by Intimacy with the Sender, Not Expertise — the Hebrew concept behind "the one who hears you hears me"

Unpacking verse 16, Alma Cho traces the Jewish concept of agent to a root meaning "sent one," and explains that "being an agent to the Jewish mind meant that you were so in tune with the person that you were standing in for that speaking to you was like speaking to the source." Jesus is the Father's perfect agent; the 72, and every follower after them, are agents in a more limited way. An agent, she stresses, is not a specialist but someone who knows the sender's likes, dislikes, and manner—so the real task is not mastering a method but growing in knowledge of Jesus himself.

Insight — Representing Jesus well is a function of intimacy with him, cultivated over time, not a skill to be acquired.

The Mission's Joy Is Rooted in Belovedness, Not in Results — Jesus redirects the 72's excitement from power over demons to their names written in heaven

The 72 return exhilarated over their authority over demons, but Jesus reroutes their joy: "do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Alma Cho notices the word joy repeated across the 72, Jesus, the Spirit, and the Father, and connects this to her own experience—leaving a coffee-shop conversation about faith not because the other person made any decision, but because "I ended up reminding myself of how much I love Jesus and of how much he loves me." The mission's joy, she concludes, is less about outcomes than about remembered belovedness.

Insight — Joy in mission comes from being reminded we are loved, not from measuring what the mission produced.

Cross-references

- [Genesis 10](#) — suggested as the source of the number 72, previewing a mission to all the nations
- [Genesis 3:15](#) — the 72 treading on serpents echoes the promise of the offspring who would crush the serpent's head
- [Hebrews 1:3](#) — cited to describe Jesus as the exact imprint of the Father, the ultimate sent one
- [Luke 9:54-55](#) — recalled to contrast James and John's desire for fiery judgment with Jesus's patience toward a rejecting village

DEVOTIONAL

There is a particular fear that comes with being handed something too large for you—a job title you can't define, a conversation you don't feel equipped to start, a mission that feels like it belongs to someone braver or more trained. Luke 10 does not remove that fear; it simply tells you the truth before you go. You will meet plenty and scarcity at once—harvest everywhere, laborers few. You will meet welcome in some houses and closed doors in others. You will carry nothing but dependence, and that will feel like weakness the whole way. And yet the 72 come back laughing. Not because everything worked, not because every town opened its door, but because something truer than success had happened to them: they had been with him, they had spoken of him, and in speaking of him they had remembered how loved they were. Jesus does not let them linger even on the astonishing—demons fleeing, serpents crushed underfoot. He points past the spectacle to the ledger: your names are written in heaven. That is the real news. So perhaps the mission was never chiefly about output. Perhaps it is a long, ordinary rehearsal of belovedness—one coffee, one honest question, one meal shared with someone

whose story you don't yet know—each one returning you to the same discovery the 72 made on the road: that being sent by love has a way of teaching you, again and again, that you are loved.

Reflection

- Where in your life have you assumed the mission of representing Jesus requires expertise you don't have, and what would it look like to trust that knowing him is enough?
- What expectation has Jesus already set for you—about opposition, delay, or mixed response—that you've been treating as a surprise instead of something you were warned about?
- When was the last time sharing your faith left you more aware of your own belovedness rather than of how the conversation 'went'—and what made the difference?

Closing prayer

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are the Lord of the Harvest—in your sovereignty, your wisdom, your revelation, and your insight. We surrender ourselves to you. Be our provision, be our protection. Give us the words to speak and the love to share. We love you, Lord, and we thank you for this chance to tell others how much you love us, and that this remembrance itself gives us so much joy. We pray you would encourage us as we go out this week. In your name, amen.

FORMATION

One thing to remember

Being sent by Jesus doesn't require expertise—only knowing him—and the mission's real reward is remembering you are loved, not results.

This week

This week, ask someone you know one honest question about their relationship with God—over coffee, a meal, or a walk—and simply listen. Before and after, pray to the Lord of the Harvest for the words and for whatever fruit he intends, trusting the outcome to him.

Return to [Luke 10:2](#)