



HEROES OF THE FAITH

LOTTIE MOON: NO GREATER JOY

LUKE 10:1-3

MAIN IDEA

Believers are to offer up their lives and go where God leads in order to experience the joy that comes with bringing Him glory.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Everyone can name things that make them happy. But how many of us recognize what brings us joy? Happiness and joy are not the same thing. Happiness tends to be affected by circumstance while joy is deeper and the fruit of the Spirit as seen in Galatians 5:22-23. Even though joy is not circumstantially based, we don't always consider how giving up something we consider valuable can bring joy. Think about people who gave up so much, even their lives, but were able to claim joy in the sacrifice.

- **How would you describe the difference between happiness and joy?**
 - **What emotion/feeling do you usually equate with giving up something you view as valuable?**
 - **Who do you consider joyful even though they appear to have sacrificed much?**
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UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> **Have someone in your group read Luke 10:1-3.**

Jesus knew His time of earthly ministry was ending and because there was still much work to be done, He commissioned a large group to go out in pairs to continue the mission. As He often did, Jesus used a common illustration to make a spiritual point. By comparing the work to be done to a harvest that was ripe and ready to be picked, Jesus instilled a sense of urgency in the situation.

Think about how crucial it is to get a harvest in during a short amount of time. Once the produce is ready to be harvested, it must be done in a timely manner or you risk losing the crop. What would the ministry of our church be like if we the members had a similar sense of urgency to reach the lost waiting to be harvested around us?

- **Why do you think Jesus commissioned a larger group of people to go out on mission at that time?**
- **How might you compare specifics of a harvest ready to be picked to reaching the lost in our community?**

As Jesus prepared the seventy to go out, He stressed that the task was large, and the work was hard. Instead of just patting them on the back and wishing them luck, Jesus gave them the key to success when the work is great. Before they went, He told them to pray and ask the Lord to send workers for the harvest. This is a powerful reminder to us that the work of the church is not about human effort but

depends on the Lord and His power. As we pray for God to send workers, it instills in us the desire to be part of the work and obey the calling to go ourselves.

- **What benefit have you experienced in praying that God would send workers to continue the ministry around you?**

- **Why is it important to recognize that this mission is not about human effort alone even though we are called to go?**

> Have someone in your group read Acts 20:22-24.

What attitude would you have if you knew obeying God was going to bring physical persecution or even death your way? Would fear of what might happen keep you from obeying? Paul knew firsthand—and from the perspective of the persecutor—what happened to people who followed Jesus. Yet, this did not slow him down or keep him from obeying. He did not shrink back in any way and even considered his own life of less value than spreading the gospel.

There are other Christian leaders over time who have showed the same kind of faith Paul did. One example is Lottie Moon, who spent her life for the sake of the gospel and did not hold her own life as valuable except for how God could use her. When faced with the truth that the harvest was plentiful, she prayed and stepped out in faith time and again. Instead of looking for others to go, she chose to obey the call of God and go herself.

Paul and Lottie Moon are two great examples of people who could have given in to fear or uncertainties or cultural norms but didn't. Their decision to run their race of life in pursuit of Jesus and sharing Him with people made huge differences in the world. What would it take for more believers to adopt the same mindset today?

- **How much do you know about Lottie Moon? How would you compare Paul with what you know about Lottie Moon?**
- **How have you responded when faced with the possibility of ridicule or persecution because of the gospel?**
- **How do you know when you are holding your own life as more valuable than following Jesus?**
- **What can you do to run after Jesus more intentionally as Paul and Lottie Moon did?**

> Have someone in your group read Philippians 2:1-5.

Paul didn't just count his life as less valuable than being used by God to reach the lost world, he also found joy in it. Many of us know the feeling of being obedient out of a sense of obligation without taking joy in our obedience. Think about the difference it makes when we have a joyful attitude about following Christ, even when it is hard or painful.

Paul was so committed to sharing the gospel and challenging others to do the same that he gave very practical instructions of how we can do that. He wrote in Philippians 2 that his joy would be even greater if those he led were to follow the example he gave of how to live for Jesus and have an impact.

Paul encouraged his readers not to give in to things that are counterproductive to being a faithful worker of the harvest. After listing several attitudes and actions that would cause us to value our life and comfort more than obeying God, he summed it up by telling us to have the same mind as Christ. Basically, that would take care of all the questions we have. Do we need to pray? Yes. Do we need to be faithful workers of the harvest?

Yes. Should we have joy in spending our lives for the sake of the gospel? Yes. Should we be compelled to live for God's glory? Yes. Paul did. Lottie Moon did.

- **Who have you known who was joyful because of the way he or she was being used by God?**

- **When your life has been tough because of your faith, was your response joy or something else? Why would it be powerful to respond with joy?**

- **What did Paul warn against in Philippians 2 that you see as the greatest obstacle to obeying God's call?**

- **What can you do to be more intentional about developing the same mind as Christ Jesus?**

APPLICATION

- **Commit to praying specifically for the Lord to bring workers for the harvest. As you pray, seek to be like Lottie Moon in offering yourself as a faithful worker. Obey whatever God tells you to do.**
- **Seek to be a faithful worker in the harvest this week by connecting with someone for a spiritual conversation.**
- **How are we working to gather the harvest currently? What do we need to do differently to be part of the great work God is doing?**

PRAY

Thank the Lord for the opportunity to be part of His work. Commit to taking the next steps toward being an more committed harvest worker.

LUKE 10:1-3

10:1. Jesus was on mission, preaching the kingdom of God in the towns and villages (4:43–44). He was also on the way to Jerusalem to meet death (9:51). Time limitations prevented him from accomplishing the mission by himself. Even the Twelve could not do it all. That is why he had trained disciples. Now was the time to see how effective they were. He sent out seventy-two (or seventy, if other manuscripts are right), each with a partner, to prepare the way for his coming. That is what Christian mission is, preparation for Christ to come into lives, into towns, and finally to come again into this world. The first person sent to prepare the way for Jesus was John the Baptist. Herod executed John. Could others preparing Christ's way expect better treatment?

Notes:

10:2. Even seventy-two followers of Jesus could not complete the task. As Christ had told them to accept anyone in ministry who did not reject or oppose them (9:50), so he now asked them to pray for others to join forces with them to reap the harvest. Already in Christ's ministry, the soil had begun to produce, and the harvest was ready (8:8, 15). Does this imply the mission of the Twelve had borne fruit (9:1–6)? Harvest does not wait. Either you reap it now, or it is ruined by weather or by withering. Not just anyone can harvest this field, though. God must select and send out the workers. He is the owner of the field who controls its destiny. His followers ask him to send help to finish the task. By this they imply they will accept whomever God sends. God sets the standards and job requirements. Disciples cannot be choosy about those whom God selects and sends.

10:3–4. Jesus did not promise the task would be easy. Rather, his command placed disciples at the crossroads. A warning accompanied the command. Wolves, wild animals known to prey on helpless

lambs, awaited them. Did they trust God to protect them from such danger? Or did they have a more pressing task (see 9:57–62)? They would have to show such trust. The essential items for travel are prohibited: No money, no extra clothes or provisions in a bag, not even an extra pair of sandals for the long walk. God would provide their needs. One final requirement was that there would be no time for socializing. The mission must be central. The harvest must be reaped while it was ready.

Notes:

ACTS 20:22-24

Not only has Paul lived, served, preached and declared faithfully, but he will finish the race. He repeats the inner witness of the Spirit which drives him to Jerusalem (20:22) and now adds that the same Spirit who took him to that city has warned him that he will face prison and hardships everywhere.

Would these difficulties eventually take his life? Apparently the Spirit has given no firm witness on that, but Paul left no question that he was quite prepared to pay that price. This attitude characterized Paul's ministry throughout his Christian life (2 Cor. 4:7–5:10; 6:4–10; 12:9; Phil. 1:19–26; 2:17; 3:8; Col. 1:24). The ultimate record, of course, appears in 2 Timothy 4:6–8 where Paul no longer needs to look toward the future of the race but actually can declare it completed. Along the way, he had a singular goal, a central mission in all that he did—to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-5

2:1. In chapter 1, Paul speaks of his joy in prayer and joy in adversity as a Christian serving his God. He could rejoice in almost any circumstance. The key to this joy is a relationship with Christ. In chapter 2, Paul explains how joy comes through another

aspect of the believer's life—humility toward others. He begins his appeal for humility by referring to the Philippians' experience. Because they are united with Christ, believers are members of his body. We have special bonds to one another due to our relationship with Christ. Our attitudes toward one another are important. The reality of our oneness in Christ is based on being encouraged by:

Notes:

1. comfort from his love
2. fellowship with the Spirit
3. tenderness and compassion

2:2. Paul instructs his readers to make my joy complete in practical responses with the following outlook toward one another:

1. being like-minded
2. having the same love
3. being one in spirit and purpose

These sentiments are viewed by Paul as being normal for Christians. Being united in Christ, believers work together for the same purposes rather than seeking areas of disagreement and division.

2:3. After revealing the positive way for believers to behave toward one another, Paul gives negatives to avoid. Unity in love means selfish ambition and vain conceit have no place in the Christian life. Such characteristics rise from pride, not from love. Instead, humility is to characterize the Christian. We are not to exalt ourselves above others.

You are probably thinking that this is easier said than done. Yet, Jesus, himself, said: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34–35). Biblical love is selfless. The opposite of this kind of love is selfishness. Humility

does not mean putting ourselves down but rather lifting others up.

Notes:

2:4. Looking out for our own interests comes naturally. We need, and receive, no instruction for that. We are instructed to look out for the interests of others. We are to keep an eye out to discover ways we can help others even when they do not see they need such help. The apostle stated in Galatians 6:2: “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

2:5. Paul proceeds to give examples for the Philippians to emulate. The first is Christ. He is the supreme example of humility, love, and selflessness. Christ’s model brings to life Paul’s words. As believers are united with Christ, we are to have the same attitude as Christ, one of humility. Paul expresses the same thought in Ephesians 4:2: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” All believers should share this humble, selfless mind-set of Christ.