

## **THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 5**

### **Laboring in Radical Dependence**

**Dr. Derek Morris**

Preaching passage: Luke 10:4-11  
Subject: How we should live as we are thrown out into the harvest  
Complement: in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.  
Exegetical idea: When we are thrown out into the harvest, we should live in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.  
Homiletical idea: **The Lord will provide!**  
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to depend fully on the Lord of the harvest as they join Him in the harvest.

#### Introduction

Have you prayed that radical prayer yet? Because the harvest truly is great but the laborers are few, Jesus appeals to us to pray a radical prayer. You have a sample of that radical prayer on the bookmark that you received as part of this series. Let's read it together:

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into Your harvest  
And you have my permission to begin with me.”

When you give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest field, he throws you out as a lamb among wolves, but you have the sweet assurance that Jesus is with you! Today, we are going to continue our series on The Radical Prayer. We will learn from the teachings of Jesus that when we are thrown out as laborers into His harvest, we are to labor in radical dependence on Him.

Listen to the radical instructions that Jesus gives to those who are willing to be thrown out into the harvest. We can read the words of Jesus in Luke 10:4, “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals.” Those instructions don't make much sense from a human perspective. When you go on a journey, it is customary to take provisions with you. Experienced travelers advise you to take more money than you think you'll need! But Jesus gives the exact opposite

advice: “Carry no money bag.” In His instructions to the Twelve, Jesus is even more specific: “Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper” (Matthew 10:9).

Why does Jesus instruct His followers to carry no money bag? What is the reason for this radical instruction? Surely when you are thrown out as a laborer into the Lord’s harvest field you will need resources in order to accomplish your mission? Doesn’t this approach seem a little careless or irresponsible? Apparently, the Lord of the harvest doesn’t want you to depend on your own resources. Rather, He wants you to labor in radical dependence on Him.

I learned a vital lesson about radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest in the summer between my junior and senior years of college. I had traveled to Sweden to plant trees. My summer work plans were carefully designed to accomplish my personal goals for the coming year. But the Lord of the harvest invaded my private world and challenged me to allow Him to throw me out into His harvest field.

Through a remarkable sequence of events, I found myself in the north of Sweden, selling Christian books. That was the last assignment that I had considered doing for the summer! But the Lord of the harvest had other plans. I memorized a brief sales presentation in Swedish and started knocking on doors. To my surprise, the first few days went well. The families that I visited took pity on me! By the end of my first week of sales, I began to feel rather self-confident. Even haughty. That’s when my troubles began.

The following Monday I worked for ten hours and sold nothing—not one single book. “These people have problems,” I said to myself. I blamed the local residents of that city when I should have been looking in a mirror. I worked all day Tuesday and again I sold nothing. By Wednesday morning, I had lost all of my self-confidence. I was so discouraged that I was

actually knocking on doors and secretly hoping that no one was home. It was pitiful!

Thoroughly dejected, I finally sat down on the side of the road in a very exclusive housing development in the north of Sweden and I gave up. I complained to the Lord of the harvest: “Lord, I can’t do this! I can’t even give these books away!” I felt like a complete failure. What I didn’t realize was that in reality I was on the verge of making a major breakthrough in my relationship with God.

“Lord,” I continued, “I know that You brought me here for a reason. I have sensed Your leading. But I can’t do this work.” Then I hesitantly added, “But if you want to work through me, Lord, I’m willing!” It was a simple prayer. A confession of radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

The Lord of the harvest invites you to radically depend upon Him. If you are depending on your own resources, you might not even give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out at all. You might say, “As soon as I have the resources that are needed for such an enormous task, then I’ll give You permission to throw me out.” Or you might allow the Lord of the harvest to throw you out, but then look for a small task to do that seems manageable with your meager resources. In order to emphasize the need for radical dependence on the Lord of the Harvest, Jesus instructs you to leave your money bag behind.

In addition to leaving your money bag behind, Jesus also instructs you not to carry a “knapsack” (Luke 10:4). Now, what is this knapsack that should also be left behind? The Greek word translated “knapsack” (NKJV), “scrip” (KJV), or “bag” (NIV), is only found 6 times in the New Testament. Each reference, including the passage in Luke 10:4, deals with going out as laborers into the Lord’s harvest field. Is this knapsack the equivalent of a 21<sup>st</sup> century rolling

suitcase? Is Jesus simply saying, “Don’t take any money and don’t take any luggage?” I don’t think so. This Greek noun has a more specialized meaning—a beggar’s bag. According to the writings of the Hellenistic philosopher Crates of Thebes, itinerant teachers carried these beggar’s bags with them. It was an overt message that they were depending on others for their support. Today, we might say, “If you love Jesus, call this 800 number and use your credit card to send me some money!” Imposing on others to provide the resources that we need.

Jesus, however, instructs His followers to leave the beggar’s bag behind. We are not to beg from others. Radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest means first that we don’t trust in our own resources and second that we don’t impose on those around us to provide the resources that we need.

Even at the time of the sending out of the seventy, the Lord of the harvest had already demonstrated His ability to provide the resources that were needed. In reference to the sending out of the Twelve, Jesus said, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?” (Luke 22:35) “Nothing,” they replied. The disciples did not depend on their own resources or impose on those around them to provide the resources that were needed. Rather, they demonstrated radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest, and they lacked nothing. The Lord of the harvest will also provide the resources that you need in His harvest field as you labor in radical dependence on Him.

The patriarch Abraham gave the Lord permission to throw him out of his home town of Ur. The author of the book of Hebrews tells us that Abraham “went out, not knowing where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:8) Abraham realized that this world was not his final resting place. He was waiting “for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews

11:10) On his life journey, Abraham came to know the LORD God as YHWH Yireh, Jehovah-Jireh, the LORD will provide. (Genesis 22:14) That can also be your experience as you labor in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

The Lord of the harvest has already provided salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Romans 10:9,13). He provides power and guidance through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; John 16:13) And the Lord of the harvest will supply all of your other needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19) As you labor in radical dependence on Him, you will discover personally that the Lord of the harvest will provide for you! He has a thousand ways to care for you as you labor in radical dependence on Him!

One way that the Lord of the harvest will provide for you is through the generosity of those whose hearts are willing. Listen to the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:5-6. “.....” If a family provides hospitality for you, not because you begged, but because the Lord of the harvest touched their hearts, Jesus says, in Luke 10:7 “remain in the same house, eating and drinking such as they give you, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house”. Accept the resources that the Lord of the harvest provides. Don’t go from house to house looking for a better offer. Be content with the resources that are provided.

Jesus also instructs laborers who are thrown out into the harvest field not to get bogged down with excess baggage. The instruction to carry no sandals (Luke 10:4) doesn’t mean that laborers should be barefoot. Jesus doesn’t say, “Don’t wear sandals,” but “Carry no sandals.” In other words, “Don’t be burdened down with excess baggage.” The verb translated “carry” literally means to “bear a burden.” The same verb is used for bearing a cross. Carrying an extra

pair of sandals may not seem like much of a burden, much of a hindrance. However, in addition to an extra pair of sandals, you might decide to take an extra pair of clothes, and an extra walking stick. Carry no (extra) sandals. Travel light. Don't be bogged down with excess baggage.

As you travel on your journey, Jesus also directs you to "greet no one along the road" (Luke 10:4). Why does Jesus give this instruction? Does He want his followers to be anti-social? No! This is a hyperbole—an exaggeration for effect. Jesus is saying, "Don't get distracted! Stay focused on your mission!" Similarly, Jesus told those who would be His disciples, "Don't even go back and say goodbye to your family. Don't look back once you have put your hands to the plow." (Luke 9:62, paraphrase). Stay focused on your mission and don't let anything or anyone distract you.

What, then, is your mission as a laborer in the Lord's harvest field? "Heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10:9). Previously, Jesus had given these instructions to the Twelve: "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7-8)

Did you notice that this mission assignment given to those who are thrown out into God's harvest field is also a description of Christ's own ministry while He was here on earth? In the report sent to John the Baptist, Jesus said, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 'The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them'" (Matthew 11:5). This ministry was only possible because, as Jesus testified, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to

preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18).

As laborers in the Lord’s harvest field, we are called to demonstrate radical dependence as we reproduce the ministry of Jesus, walk in His footsteps, and serve in His name. It is not by might or by power but by God’s Spirit that the harvest will be gathered in. Jesus testified that “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Only as we have freely received can we freely give. And we give to others in constant awareness of our radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

As I sat on the side of the road in that exclusive housing development in the north of Sweden, I was painfully aware of my own inadequacies. I had tried to depend on my own wisdom, my own strength, and I had failed miserably. But after I had prayed a simple prayer of surrender, a radical prayer that gave God permission to throw me out into His harvest field, then the Lord of the harvest began to work in a miraculous way. I got up from the side of the road and made my way to the next house. When the lady opened the front door, I sensed in my heart that the Holy Spirit had been there ahead of me! That family bought a set of books. And that story was repeated over and over again during the next five weeks.

Several days after I had prayed the radical prayer, and made the commitment to labor in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest, I experienced another miracle. At one home, I was impressed to give my testimony. That may not sound unusual to you, but may I remind you that I didn’t speak Swedish. However, as I responded to the conviction of God’s Spirit, something remarkable happened to me. I felt a freedom to begin communicating in a language

that I had not studied and did not speak. I gave my testimony...in Swedish! Perhaps you're thinking, "How do you know that you were speaking Swedish?" Because the lady of the house obviously understood what I was saying. God was giving me the gift of tongues and He was giving her the gift of understanding. He is YHWH Yireh, Jehovah-Jireh! When I left that house, I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lord of the harvest was able to do more than I could even ask or think if I was only willing to labor in radical dependence on Him!

Not every miracle of provision will be the same. But when you make a commitment to allow the Lord of the harvest to throw you out into His harvest field, and labor in radical dependence on Him, you too will witness God's remarkable provisions as He works in you and through you. **The Lord will provide!**

You will discover the truth contained in that old gospel song:

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus  
Just to take Him at His word  
Just to rest upon His promise  
Just to know "Thus saith the Lord!"  
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him  
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus,  
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!