In Luke 10:4 (NKJV), Jesus instructed His disciples:

> “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.”

At the same time, in Matthew 5:47 (NKJV), Jesus taught:

> “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?”

This raises an important question:
Why would Jesus seem to discourage greeting people in one place, and encourage broader greetings in another?

Understanding the Context

Let’s start by reading the broader context:

Luke 10:1-4 (NKJV):

> 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.
> 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.
> Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.”

Jesus was sending out the seventy disciples urgently to proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom of God. Their mission was time-sensitive. Every moment counted because souls needed to hear the Good News of salvation.

In ancient Jewish culture, greetings (“shalom” and others) often involved elaborate rituals, lengthy conversations, and strong social obligations.
Stopping to greet people along the way could have easily distracted or delayed the disciples from their higher calling — proclaiming the Gospel.

This command was not a universal ban on politeness or friendliness.
Rather, it was a temporary instruction tied specifically to the urgency and seriousness of their evangelistic mission.

Why No Greetings During Evangelism?

Imagine a disciple traveling on his way to preach. As he passes near a relative’s home, he decides to stop and greet them. In that interaction, he might:

- Hear news about a death in the family.
- Be given errands or responsibilities unrelated to his mission.
- Receive warnings that stir fear or doubt.
- Get emotionally entangled in earthly matters.

Such distractions could easily shift his focus away from the divine task entrusted to him. His mind, meant to be centered on proclaiming Christ, could become preoccupied with secondary concerns.

Therefore, Jesus wisely instructed:
“Greet no one along the road.”
The Kingdom message was so urgent and precious that it required full attention and unwavering focus.

This instruction resonates with 2 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV):

> “No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Just as soldiers avoid distractions in battle, so too must laborers for the Gospel stay single-minded during their mission.

How Does Matthew 5:47 Fit In?

In Matthew 5:47, Jesus is teaching about loving beyond boundaries.
He rebukes shallow, selective love that only favors one’s friends and family.

> “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?” *(NKJV)*

Here, Jesus encourages a heart posture that embraces universal love and kindness, including even strangers and enemies.
Thus, outside the specific context of evangelistic urgency, believers are called to greet, welcome, and love all people, showing the nature of God’s expansive grace.

Lessons for Us Today

Likewise, when we are on assignment for God—whether it’s evangelism, prayer, worship, teaching, or any other ministry—we must:

- Maintain laser-like focus.
- Avoid unnecessary distractions.
- Protect our minds from earthly concerns.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV) reminds us:

> “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, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

Even simple, innocent distractions can dilute the power and urgency of our spiritual mission.

For example, during a worship service, it’s wise to switch off phones, minimize movement, and stay fully engaged in prayer,

worship, and listening to the Word.
Everything we do for God deserves our full, undivided attention.

Conclusion

Jesus’ instruction in Luke 10:4 was not about forbidding kindness. It was about ensuring urgency, purity of focus, and undistracted obedience when advancing the Kingdom of God.

After the mission, as seen in Matthew 5:47, believers are to greet everyone warmly and reflect the inclusive love of Christ.

Maranatha! (“Come, Lord Jesus!”)

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