

The theme for our morning's meditation is the Joy of the Lord's Messengers. The point that is made is the celebration of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. In Luke's Gospel we see that Jesus appointing seventy messengers symbolic of the seventy nations found in Gen 10 showing that the good news of Jesus Christ was meant for the whole world. He sends them out in pairs showing that there was great support for each other as they went in pairs. If one fell down then the other could support. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. The messengers go where the Lord himself intends to go. The messengers are Christ's representatives. The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few and therefore they were to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Prayer is necessary for those harvesting as well as for new recruits because the harvest can go bad if they are not harvested at the proper time.

Jesus sends them out with instructions for their journey. They were to be *prepared for opposition* – like lambs in the midst of wolves with the possibility of being devoured. Perils, opposition and hostility will mark the mission of the seventy. They were also to *Travel Light* -No purse-No financial security, No travel bags to hinder – Literally no Rucksack on your back-no great comforts- Do not carry - sandals – simplicity one pair is good enough. They were to be focused on their mission. Eastern hospitality could easily make a roadside greeting into a long drawn out lunch or dinner. You may meet somebody on the road and they not to be distracted with all that but to keep their eyes on him.

God's messengers will ask you to come to their home for a cup of tea which then turns into lunch or dinner!! Jesus warns them to be messengers of peace. They were to share the good news of peace possible between God and human beings. The response will vary. Some will share that peace – welcome the messenger and then their peace will be with them. Others will reject that peace and may not be willing to receive the peace or their message.

The messengers were to remain in one house – so that time is not wasted in moving from one house to another. They were to eat and drink what was provided. They are to have no compunction about receiving their meals free, for the labourer deserves his wages. They were not to make any fuss about food rituals. Their message was to be shared both by word and deed. They were to cure the sick just like Jesus did. They went out and did just that. We know this from their report that 'even the demons submit to us!' In Christ's name we are called to proclaim healing for the people. It is our job to pray for the sick for healing. It is God's job to heal them. Jesus tells them that the Kingdom of God had come near them. The Gospel has been brought to their doors. If they choose to reject it then the onus of responsibility will be on them. The message is the same for us.

The Seventy returned with joy. They were excited that they were able to release those who were possessed with evil spirits. In the mission of the seventy Jesus saw the defeat of Satan, a defeat as sudden as a flash of lightning. Satan has met with an ignominious defeat and has been dethroned from his prosecutor's role in the heavenly court. The authority that has been given to the seventy is the authority of Jesus. Jesus therefore says I have given you authority over snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

May we as the Lord's messenger rejoice in the good news of great joy that he has given us and show our victory over sin and Satan in our daily lives.