

## **Pastor Writes**

Greetings to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'The joy of the Lord's messengers.' In Luke's gospel Jesus has been teaching his followers about the cost of discipleship. After this, Jesus appointed seventy two others and sent them two by two to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his field.' We see that they are sent in pairs because there is great support in that if one falls, there is another to help. The messengers are Christ's representatives. Jesus tells them that adequate workers are not available for spreading the good news. He therefore asks them to pray to the Lord of the harvest to raise adequate workers. Prayer is necessary for those harvesting, as well as for the new workers because the harvest can go bad if it is not harvested at the right time. The purpose of sending out the messengers was to make sure that people from all over the world can hear the good news and enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus then gives instructions to those whom he sends out. He calls them to be prepared for opposition and tells them that he was sending them out 'like lambs into the midst of wolves.' Anybody undertaking his mission will have the possibility of being devoured, face perils, opposition and hostility.

Secondly, he tells them to travel light. They were not to carry a purse, or sandals. The idea is to travel with no great comforts. The point is that the comforts and the desires of this world hinder the work of the Lord's messengers. We too are called to heed to these instructions so that we can be effective in the Lord's work.

The third point that Jesus says is, 'greet no one on the road.' What Jesus means by this is that his messengers are to be focused. Eastern hospitality will easily make the road side meeting into a long drawn out lunch or dinner! They were to speak God's peace to the house that they entered in. This peace was the peace that was possible between God and human beings because of Jesus Christ. Some would receive that peace and others would reject that peace. However, they were to remain in the same house eating and drinking whatever was provided to them. They were to have no compunction about receiving their meals free, because the workers deserve their wages.

Thirdly, we see the message that was to be handed over by the Lord's messengers. They were to cure the sick and say to them 'the kingdom of God has come near to you.' Jesus' disciples are expected to cure the sick just as he went around healing the sick. We are called to pray for those who are sick and God will heal them. Jesus tells them that the kingdom of God has been brought to your doors through the preaching of the gospel. If we choose to reject the gospel then the onus of responsibility will be ours. God has revealed his kingdom to each one of us through the life and witness of his Son Jesus. We cannot enter this kingdom on our own merit or by our good deeds. The only way to enter his kingdom is through the personal belief on Jesus as Lord and Saviour. There is no other passport that will take us into this kingdom.

After their mission trip, the messengers returned back with joy saying, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us!' Jesus said to them, 'I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy and nothing will harm you.' In the mission of the seventy two, Jesus saw the defeat of Satan, a defeat as sudden as a flash of lightning. Satan has met with ignominious defeat and has been dethroned from his prosecutor's role in the heavenly court. The authority that has been given to us is the authority of Jesus himself. However, Jesus tells them not to rejoice at the powers they exercise but to rejoice that their names are written in heaven.

As we look at the world around we are called to be the Lord's messengers. We are to continuously pray for the raising up of new workers in God's field. We are to go out in his name leading a life of simplicity and be prepared for opposition. We are to be focused in our work and not be distracted. We are called to rejoice not only in the powerful work that the Lord does, but more so that we are members of his kingdom. May God help us to reflect his joy in being his messengers.

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