

## **Text: Luke 10:1-20**

Do you know what an emissary is? An emissary is someone who is sent somewhere in order to act as a representative. The key word in the definition is sent.

In our text for today, Jesus sends out 72 of His emissaries. They will be going into places that Jesus will go into in the near future. They will be acting on Jesus' behalf.

Our text also parallel's Luke's account of Jesus sending out the twelve Apostles recorded in Luke chapter 9.

You many also read another number associated with our text – 70. Did Jesus send out 70 or 72? Why the difference? Jesus spoke of the number 72, but later the scribes used the number 70 recalling the 70 Elders of Moses. Does the number really matter? No the main point is that Jesus did indeed send out His disciples, His emissaries into the Mission Field.

Jesus sent these disciples out two by two to do what to do what Jesus did and does and is going to do. And that is to preach the presence of the Kingdom, to heal and perform miracles and to say peace to houses where they are accepted into. Notice they are not to teach. Only Jesus teaches at this point. It wouldn't be until the Day of Pentecost that the disciples would begin the ministry of teaching.

This wasn't going to be an easy trip. They have given their lives to following Jesus. They have left family and friends. They are sent without provisions. They are dependent on the care and protection of others. They are not to depend on themselves but rather trust in the Lord. The Lord that sent them on this mission. The Lord of Mission and promise. The Lord that promised them safety from the devil.

Jesus warns them as He is sending them, ***"Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves."*** (v.3) I imagine the disciples really didn't want to hear that. By calling the disciples lambs, Jesus is suggesting that their will be danger such

as rejection, hostility and maybe violence on their mission, as they announce the presence of the Kingdom of God and perform miracles.

Really is this any different than what Christian's experience in our world today? We too are lambs in the midst of wolves. Wolves that value earthly things like same sex marriage, abortion, greed, adultery. They certainly don't want to hear that the kingdom of God is near because they will come to know that marriage is only between a man and a woman, abortion is murder, greed is idolatry, and adultery breaks the vow of marriage made before God. But like the 72 we forward in the knowledge of hate that many have for believers in God. But we like the 72 are not ashamed of Jesus and His Word.

The 72 while they carry nothing visible, carry within them Jesus' redemption and peace. The peace that has come down from above they can now give. As Jesus' emissaries, they represent Jesus. As St. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, **"always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies."** (2 Corinthians 4:10) The 72 follow the sacrifice made by many prophets before them. They must depend completely on the Lord and give up their lives for His Kingdom.

Jesus sends the 72 out with instructions – **"Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup> Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' <sup>6</sup> And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup> Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you."** (v.4-8)

The 72 would be relying on the kindness of strangers. One thing is also interesting- stay at one house. By doing so the 72 would not be going house to house to solicit donations- this was not the purpose of the mission. By staying at one home they would be building

relationships with all who lived in that house. That would establish a strong base in that particular town or village for Jesus and future emissaries.

Jesus also has more instructions for them, ***"Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*** <sup>10</sup> ***But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say,*** <sup>11</sup> ***'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'*** (v.9-11)

The message of peace is expressed through healing and the proclamation of the nearness of the Kingdom of God. This mission of word and deed continues the pattern of the prophets before them which Jesus fulfills in His ministry.

To the unrepentant cities, those that do not receive the 72 Jesus has a warning for them, ***"I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.*** <sup>13</sup> ***"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*** <sup>14</sup> ***But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.*** <sup>15</sup> ***And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.*** <sup>16</sup> ***"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."*** (v.12-16) A warning for all mankind that rejection of Jesus Christ has eternal consequences – Hades.

So how did the 72 feel when they came back from their mission? Were they depressed, tired, beaten? Not at all! Luke writes, ***"The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!'"*** (v.17) The 72 had experienced the Great Reversal. The reversal of the effects of sin and death, which came about at the fall in Eden.

Yes, Jesus had given authority to the 72, ***"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you."***<sup>20</sup> ***Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*** (v.19-20) Jesus directs their attention away from thoughts of sensational success to contemplation about their heavenly status. The authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and power over the enemy shouldn't inflate their ego and seek visible achievements. Ego and pride are tools that Satan could use to attack them and get their minds off the mission Jesus has given them. Their focus must be on the heavenly gift of grace.

As I look out from this pulpit today, I see emissaries of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every one of you are Jesus' emissaries. The question is what are we as a church and what are we individually doing in the Mission Field? As a church we faithfully proclaim Christ Crucified and His life saving Gospel, we bring Jesus to children of the community through PCDC.

In a world that challenges and yes even rejects Jesus, we need to stand firm in our faith as Jesus' emissaries. We need to engage and bring the life saving word of God to as many people as is humanly possible. Yes, we will be rejected, yes, we will be called vile names and yes, we may even be persecuted for our faith. It's no worse than what previous emissaries of Jesus have gone through. Hold on to these words of our Lord, ***"I am with you always to the end of the age"*** (Matthew 28:20b) and ***"rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*** (v20b)

Amen!