

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (July 7): "Pray the Lord to send out laborers into his harvest" Scripture: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. 2 And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 **Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road.** 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; 9 heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 11 '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.' 12 I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" 18 And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Meditation: What kind of harvest does the Lord want us to reap today for his kingdom? When Jesus commissioned seventy of his disciples to go on mission, he gave them a vision of a vast field that is ready to be harvested for the kingdom of God. Jesus frequently used the image of a harvest to convey the coming of God's reign on earth. The harvest is the fruition of much labour and growth - beginning with the sowing of seeds, then growth to maturity, and finally the reaping of fruit for the harvest.

Be a sower of God's word of peace and mercy

What does Jesus mean when he says his disciples must be "*lambs in the midst of wolves*"? The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when wolves and lambs will dwell in peace (Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25). This certainly refers to the second coming of the Lord Jesus when all will be united under the Lordship of Jesus after he has put down his enemies and established the reign of God over the heavens and the earth. In the meantime, the disciples must expect opposition and persecution from those who would oppose the Gospel. Jesus came to lay down his life for us, as our sacrificial lamb, to atone for our sins and the sins of the world. We, in turn, must be willing to offer our lives with gratitude and humble service for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are called to speak and witness in God's name

What is the significance of Jesus appointing seventy disciples to the ministry of the word? Seventy was a significant number in biblical times. Moses chose seventy elders to help him in

the task of leading the people through the wilderness. The Jewish Sanhedrin, the governing council for the nation of Israel, was composed of seventy members. In Jesus' times seventy was held to be the number of nations throughout the world. Jesus commissioned the seventy to a two-fold task - to speak in his name and to act with his power.

Jesus gave his disciples instructions for how they were to carry out their ministry. They must go and serve as people without guile, full of charity (selfless giving in love) and peace, and simplicity. They must give their full attention to the proclamation of God's kingdom and not be diverted by other lesser things. They must travel light - only take what was essential and leave behind whatever would distract them - in order to concentrate on the task of speaking the word of the God. They must do their work, not for what they can get out of it, but for what they can give freely to others, without expecting reward or payment. "Poverty of spirit" frees us from greed and preoccupation with possessions and makes ample room for God's provision. The Lord Jesus wants his disciples to be dependent on him and not on themselves.

Jesus ends his instructions with a warning: If people reject God's invitation and refuse his word, then they bring condemnation on themselves. When God gives us his word there comes with it the great responsibility to respond. Indifference will not do. We are either for or against God in how we respond to his word.

Our true source of joy comes from God who saves us

Why does Jesus tell his disciples to not take joy in their own successes, even spiritual ones? Jesus makes clear that the true source of our joy is God, and God alone. Regardless of the circumstances, in good times and bad times, in success or loss, God always assures us of victory in Jesus Christ. Jesus assures his disciples that he has all power over evil, including the power of Satan and the evil spirits or fallen angels who conspire against us. In fact, that is why Jesus came into the world to overthrow the evil one (John 12:31). We, too, as disciples of Jesus have been given spiritual authority and power for overcoming the works of darkness and evil (1 John 2:13-14).

God gives us his life-giving word that we may have abundant life in him. He wills to work in and through each of us for his glory. God shares his word with us, and he commissions us to speak it boldly and plainly to others. Do you witness the truth and joy of the Gospel by word and example to those around you? [author Don Schwager](#)

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, may the joy and truth of the Gospel transform my life that I may witness it to those around me. Grant that I may spread your truth and merciful love wherever I go." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- God, our strength and hope, give us the courage to take up the mantle of discipleship. Help us speak the truth, confront evil, and work to bring about your reign on earth. Grant us grace to encourage others. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who shows us a new way. **Amen.**

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home". Jesus said in reply, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God". (Luke 9: 61 - 62)

