**Luke 10:1-20 (ESV)**

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. 2  And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 3 Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4  Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet 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 will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7 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. 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 will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. 13  “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. 14  But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. 16  “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.” 17  The seventy-two 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 on 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.”

**“Where Is The Safety?”**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Galatians 1:3-5). How strange it must have seemed during those trying times of the Revolutionary War that great things happened for America? The Declaration of Independence from 1776 went far outside of what any could see of freedom at that time. Cutting ties with Great Britain showed no signs of safety for a meager 13 colonies. America was on her own and everything rested on those opening words from the Declaration stating, “We hold these truths to be self-evident...”

If independence came for our country by separation, then how much more has the baptized into Christ received salvation from all the evil ages of a sinful world? This kind of separation is self-evident by the Spirit for St. Paul declared, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Yet, the mystery received by freedom in the Gospel is what Jesus also wants us freely to give. Luther makes the comment, “For the church was always best when it was living among the worst people” (Galatians commentary 392). The sending out of the 72 disciples proves God made the Gospel His highest priority and not a private matter or a personal belief. Safety in Christ means not to miss His promise: “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

There is no question over who does the sending of His disciples. Jesus said, “Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.” This call seems foolish and impractical at many levels, especially when it involves danger of being sheep among wolves. However, what Jesus makes known is that anything less than His Word can become an idol against trust in Him. Those He sends are by no means sinless or immune to the Devil’s ways. To strip those 72 disciples of their securities would lead them to a simple trust in His Word. In the same way, this Word become flesh took with Him no princely robes, royal riches, or anything from heaven when coming to die for a sinful world.

Your Names are written in heaven so Christ’s Word is our strength on earth. We are to neither lack preparation nor be foolish, especially in times when freedom is under attack by corruption and political correctness. However, the truth must be made known that the western Church has had too many securities and not enough need for what Jesus’ says. This has brought false-dreams that have gone against the Gospel or kept us from facing the wolves. Dietrich Bonheoffer saw the same insecurity in Germany during WWII preaching of only One who could save His precious sheep. He said, “To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: "He leads the way, keep close to him” (Cost of Discipleship).[[1]](#footnote-1) What God gave in baptism holds the victory of Jesus’ upon our lives. He even calls forth a reversal of the world’s values. Yet, “the workers are few” so we pray, since His Word alone show the harvest field and keeps calling out for the harvest.

There is no question over the agenda Jesus has when sending out His disciples. If you ever want the message of good news summed up well here it is in our text, “Peace be to this house!” Of course, this peace calls all to repent and believe in Christ as the promised Savior for sinners. It is of the quality that only comes by God’s grace given in His Word. The same kind of greeting the risen Jesus speaks in the house of His fearful disciples on Easter morning saying, “Peace to you!” Jesus makes speaking His peace of forgiveness and hope to be the priority of those He sends. The Gospel is pretty cut and dry when it goes to work. Those who hear will be a “Son of peace” with generosity over such fellowship shared by faith in Christ. Those who close their ears to the Word reject the messengers only to make matters worse.

Your Names are written in heaven so His Word lets us speak salvation. The Gospel will impact lives that is the promise. Jesus said to them about a town, “Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.” Mercy for sinners and the message of forgiveness go together. Just as Jesus’ own suffering took upon Himself our punishment, while His Word of the cross proclaims forgiveness. What pulls this goodness apart is neither the Word nor the messengers, but rests upon any who reject what God gives to save. Judgment is worse not because of the degree of sin against the Law, but to those who have no room for the Gospel. The Word and Sacrament is how the kingdom of God comes near to heal and help us. Familiarity with these gifts of God can breed sinful indifference just like Jesus “woes” over the towns He visited repeatedly. How encouraging is it to know the Savior does not give up so easily on us. He keeps offering the Gospel as promised through His established ministry so the glory remains in His Holy Name.

Those sent came back celebrating the unexpected outcome of Jesus’ Word. They said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’ And he said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” The grip of Satan upon humanity has no place when the confession of Christ boldly goes forth in this world. It both gathers and separates. Whatever the sacrifice and rejection a more glorious light shines. As an early church father describes, “In one second, Satan fell beneath the victory of the cross. Ordinary people were anointed and sent out by reason of their mission and were highly successful in a second, through miracles of healing those in pain, sickness and evil spirits” (ACC). There is divine protection and power from Christ among His baptized. Many times, we overlook and marginalize this in our own lives out of fear. Satan and all his followers know how to put on a poker face. To call the bluff means whether in life or death Jesus already says to His sheep, “nothing shall hurt you.”

Your Names are written in heaven so His Word we shamelessly celebrate. This happens not from our boldness because we lack much today compared to those who came before us having little freedom and safety. However, Jesus gives us this hope, “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” At the present, it is quite the warzone with the Gospel and will be until the Last Day. If we were looking at the battle, there is not much to celebrate especially in our culture. However, the sacrament brings Christ and the eternal victory that turned shame into our celebration. He remains our first and final hope just as His true body and blood is for the forgiveness of our sins. Safety in Christ means not to miss His promise: “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Amen. Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding be with your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus life everlasting, Amen.

1. http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2723088-nachfolge [↑](#footnote-ref-1)