

Luke 10:1-12, 16-20 When the Lord says, “Go!” Pentecost 7 July 3, 2016

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Grace and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

God's Word to bless us and the people of our nation is written in Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

These are Your words heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth. Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear Christian Friends,

As citizens of this country, we live in a land of opportunity! We have freedom to travel anywhere in the country. We have freedom of speech and freedom to express our faith. We have freedom to elect our representatives and have freedom to choose our occupation to support our family and Christian causes. Sadly, too often in our nation we are seeing people abusing their freedoms, like people demanding abortion “rights.” The people of our nation are tempted to trust in money, political systems, and our military might, but not in God. The Bible warns in Psalm 146, *“Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the Lord, who remains faithful forever. (v. 3-6)*

Our mission as Christian citizens is two-fold. The first goal is to bring the Law and Gospel to people that they might repent and believe in Jesus. Our second goal is to help people call on the Lord in faith to seek God's help for our nation. As we live by faith we can be sure of blessing as we follow

When the Lord says, “Go!”

First, go with prayer. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Also we read in 1 Timothy 2: *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone -- for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (v. 1-2)* It is important that we pray for our nation and for those in authority, so that in times of peace and safety, we'll have more opportunities to bring the Gospel to family, friends, and even strangers. When Christianity flourishes a country is blessed. The best way to change the moral climate of our nation is to bring the Gospel to people that hearts and minds will be changed through faith. Jesus said, *“Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)*

God wants all to be saved; we are to pray to have the same motive toward all people. Before sending out His followers Jesus said, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (v.2)* There is always a need for more work to be done before the end comes. Pray that God would move us and all His people to go!

Second, go with the Lord's provision. Jesus said, *“Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.” (v.3-4)* It seemed like an impossible task to do what Jesus wanted them to do, like a lamb overcoming a wolf. But, Jesus would be their Good Shepherd to protect them. Also, Jesus expressed a sense of urgency when sending out the 72. He did not want them to return home and gather all kinds of extra items for the trip. He would provide for them.

Jesus said, *“When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him.... When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'” (v.5, 8-9)* The word of “peace” that Jesus is describing is the message that He is the Savior who had come. Some people in the towns by faith were looking forward to a Savior coming and gladly received the disciples' message. They were also glad that Jesus gave the disciples authority to heal the sick and cast out demons in His name.

Although Jesus has not given us a specific command to go without extra provisions, He does want us to trust in Him to provide for the work. Although He has not promised to give us power to heal sicknesses, we know that He has given us His powerful Word. God promised, “[My Word] *will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*” (Isaiah 55:11) As we go, Jesus provides!

Third, don't be disappointed. It is heartbreaking to see our government promote immoral things. Recently the Supreme Court allowed a law to be struck down that would have helped women who might need hospital after an abortion and would have saved many unborn lives. This will no doubt not only bring harm to people in Texas and but in other states including our own. I am very disappointed by this. Yet, the need to protect lives of innocent unborn children and their mothers continues. We cannot give up.

It is the same with some people who reject the Gospel. We cannot give up on them. Jesus said, “*He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.*” (v.16) We should warn people that by rejecting God's Word of Christ, they are rejecting the one way that God has given to save them. As a nation or as individuals: people will reap what they sow. If people insist in replacing God in their lives or as a nation, then they better prepare for judgment. Yet, this is not how God wants the lives of people who reject Him to end.

Fourth, we go in God's power. I mentioned earlier that Jesus had sent out His followers to do miracles. It states, “*The 72 returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.'* Jesus replied, *'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to ... overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.'*” (v.17-19) The devil is powerful. He has deceived many people in our nation and in the world. But when Jesus' disciples proclaimed the truth, the devil's kingdom fell. Armed with God's Word we too can take our stand against the devil.

Christ is our defense. Jesus has defeated the devil and silenced him by His victory on the cross! Nothing will stand in the way of God accomplishing His good purpose for us. Even sickness or injury will work for our good. By Christ's death, He has given us eternal life. When we die our souls will be carried to heaven by God's angels and we will be rid of the devil, evil, sin, and death forever! Jesus said, “*Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*” (v.20) Through faith in Christ, we are citizens of heaven! This far exceeds the blessings we have as citizens of this country.

As I said that the beginning, we live in a land of great opportunity! We have freedom to speak, to travel, to vote, to work, and to proclaim Jesus' victory. As citizens of this great land, we pray that God would spare our nation and especially pray that the hearts of many more citizens will be changed by the Gospel to believe in Jesus. We trust that God will provide for us to spread His Word. We know that not all people will believe, but we will continue to speak about Jesus to turn as many people as possible from their sins to His forgiveness! And finally, we are confident that God's Word which has blessed our lives will continue to bless a growing number of people in our nation. God grant it for Jesus' sake. Amen.