

But rejoice that your names are written in Heaven

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost) is Luke 10:1-20. Our text has three segments: Jesus sending out the seventy-two; Jesus speaking judgment on unrepentant cities; and the return of the seventy-two.

Jesus covered Judea with his message as thoroughly as he had Galilee. The number seventy-two may subtly symbolize the number of Gentile nations around Israel. On that understanding, Jesus broadens the scope of the outreach here, building on what He had just done in reaching out to Samaritans.

By sending two out at a time, Jesus fulfills the OT requirements (Deut. 19:15) that two witnesses are necessary if there is to be any judgment made, as there will be in Lk 10:10–15.

The harvest was plentiful then and still is now. The Church continues praying that the Lord will raise up new generations of workers to harvest souls unto eternal life. Jesus not only sends these, He also instructs them to ask the Lord of the harvest to multiply their numbers.

It's not comforting to be compared to a lamb sent among wolves. Please note, not just sheep, but lambs. The picture expresses a danger about which Jesus briefly, but clearly, warns them. The comforting news is the identity of the sender: "I [Jesus] am sending you," with the implications that those sent will be protected by Him. They are sent with His authority. He does the same for us.

It won't take these people long to pack! No purse, no bag, no sandals (probably meaning no extra sandals), and no small talk on the road. Jesus has already dealt with any objections in His discourse on the cost of discipleship in the previous chapter. The admonition now is simply to go! The implied promise is that all of their needs will be met.

This peace is more than a pious wish. Jesus refers to a greeting from them as apostles and bearers of His own divine peace. By their greeting they are to extend this peace as Jesus Himself did in John 20:19. This peace is an objective gift, the peace wrought by the Gospel, which makes God our-friend and us His children so that all is well with us. It is to be a permanent possession.

Although Sodom was so sinful that God destroyed it, the people who heard the message of Jesus and his disciples were even more accountable, because they had the gospel of the kingdom preached to them.

In mentioning the four cities Jesus is contrasting more receptive pagans with children of Abraham who were less open-minded.

Incredible things were done by the seventy-two, even the demons were driven out by the disciples (v. 17), which meant that Satan was suffering defeat.

BUT, Jesus directs the attention of the disciples away from thoughts about sensational success to contemplation about their heavenly status. In Him, we cannot lose, even though put to death, for in the end Christ grants us eternal life.

Prayer: Dear Lord God heavenly Father, thank you, thank you for having my name written in your heavenly book. Amen