

The Lord's Chosen Ministers

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that Christ's joy was a deep, spiritual rejoicing rooted in the success of faithful ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit and marked by humility and thanksgiving.

Scripture: Luke 10:21, John 14:12, James 5:13, Numbers 11:29

Topics: "Spiritual Joy", "Christian Ministry", "Holy Spirit Empowerment"

Description

In 'The Lord's Chosen Ministers,' C.H. Spurgeon reflects on the rare and profound joy of Jesus as He rejoiced in the success of His disciples' ministry. Spurgeon explores the spiritual nature of Christ's joy, emphasizing its foundation in the Holy Spirit's power, humility, and thanksgiving. This devotional sermon encourages believers to find joy in faithful service and to rejoice in the work of God through others, fostering a spirit of unity and gratitude.

Transcript

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight." Luke 10:21.

THE habitual state of mind of Jesus was, I think, a deep calm. Beyond all ordinary men, He possessed His soul in peace. We find Him sleeping in the midst of a storm, the very best thing that He could do. He knew that, rocked in the cradle of the deep by His great Father, He was supremely safe, so, finding a pillow, and going near the stern of the ship, He fell asleep.

But there were times when His spirit ebbed out. He was always a Man of Sorrows—the surface of His soul was often disturbed with storms of grief—and then we read that "Jesus wept." Sometimes, however, the tide was at the flood, and so we here, read, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." It is very seldom that we read this. So seldom did He show His joy that it was recorded at once by the Evangelist. Luke took care to note that, even as others had mentioned His tears. Jesus was a man of constant grief, a mourner all his days, and yet at times the deep calm of His spirit was stirred by something other than the north wind. The south wind blew and all was joyous and bright with Him—"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." I thought that this would be a profitable theme for meditation for a short time, tonight, in contrast to that of this morning. [Sermon #2091, Volume 35—Jesus Wept.] I do not intend to go so deeply into this subject as I did into that, but I think that there are some matters here which may be instructive to us.

I. First, let us ask, WHAT WAS THE OCCASION OF OUR MASTER'S JOY? "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." You may judge a man by his joy—as a man rejoices—so is he. What made Christ rejoice? If I were to put the question to all of you who are happy, tonight, "What makes you rejoice?" some might, perhaps, be ashamed to answer my enquiry, but there was no reason why Jesus should blush at that which made Him glad.

First, I notice that He rejoiced in stirring times. He had sent out the 70 disciples. They had gone, in 35 pairs, all over the country, telling that He was coming and He was reckoning upon going to every city and place to which He had sent His heralds. Seeing what was done and what was going to be done, the Savior's heart rejoiced. Some people like laziness—Christ loved activity. This morning I showed you that there was no indolence in Him, for He wept, and that old word, indolence, means not grieving, does it not? But He did grieve, so there was no indolence in Him in the old and literal classic sense and, certainly, no indolence in Him in the sense in which we now use the word. He could weep and, therefore, He could work. He could feel and, therefore, He could bestir Himself. And in stirring times He felt Himself glad. How some of us long to see the Church of God fully astir! We seem to have a dreadful calm, nowadays, like that of the "Ancient Mariner" when—

"The very deep did rot.

Alas, that ever this should be!"

We need the wind from Heaven to stir our sails and set the ship in motion. We need the breath of the Holy Spirit to speed us to our desired haven. It was not thus with Christ, for He rejoiced in times of activity!

He rejoiced, next, when He was surrounded by faithful preachers. There were 70 of His disciples—quite a little Conference! He felt Himself in good company with the seventy—all faithful preachers of the Word—gathered around Him. You say that it was not many. No, but it was a good beginning! It was a noble beginning that, out of a few disciples (and He had not many, at most), He should be able to pick out 70 who were fit to be sent out to preach! They must have been a fine class of men, though they were simple-minded fishermen and peasants. And to find 70 of them who could be sent to preach and declare that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, who were fit to be trusted with miraculous power, might well make Him glad! Brothers, when we see plenty of preachers of the Gospel, when we see the Lord calling one and another to go forth and proclaim His Word of Grace, then do we, also, rejoice in spirit!

Jesus also rejoiced because all these 70 had found a welcome. It seemed rather an experiment to send out 70 unlettered men to proclaim the Kingdom of God. It was like sending lambs into the midst of wolves! Would not some of them be stoned to death? When the muster-roll was read, would not one or two, at least, be missing? But no, "the seventy returned again with joy." They had all been welcomed! Everybody seems to have received them and entertained them—and they came back in high spirits! And the Savior, seeing them return thus, not as preachers without congregations, but itinerant ministers who had been listened to, everywhere, with respectful attention, our Master felt, I say, that He, also, must rejoice, so, "Jesus rejoiced in spirit."

It is of no use having ministers if they have nobody to preach to and it is very likely that, before long, we shall have more ministers than hearers if things go on as they now go! We have so many of our brothers with marvelous gifts of dispersion that we have seen magnificent congregations that used to gather around earnest Evangelical preachers, scattered to the winds! There is nothing in that to rejoice over, except for Satan to rejoice! But when you see a people made willing, in the day of God's Power, to listen to

the heralds of the Cross, then you may, indeed, rejoice!

Jesus rejoiced, further, because He heard that the Power of God had rested on them all. The 70 had healed the sick and, to their own astonishment, they had cast out devils—and they mentioned it with great exultation! "And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven." Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we need not rejoice because there are many professed preachers! And it might not be a sure ground of rejoicing if they all had congregations. But it is a safe reason for joy when the Power of God rests upon them! Only give a man that old Power of God with him and I am not afraid but what he will have a congregation, and I am certain that grand results will come of his work! If God is with us, His Word which we preach cannot fail! It will not only reach the ear, but it will pierce the heart! It will awaken the spiritually dead! It will turn hearts of stone to flesh! There is still a Divine Power going with the preaching of the Word of God. The Gospel is still the Power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes! And when we see that that is the case, and that men and women are being converted, then I am sure that, like our Master, we shall do well to rejoice in spirit!

Further than this, our Savior rejoiced in spirit because He saw that Satan's kingdom was being shaken. To fetch Satan down from his throne, is no small thing—how is it to be done? Well, the philosophers may try their magnetism, but the devil is too strong for them. The orators and rhetoricians may try their rounded periods and decorate their orations with quotations from the poets, but the devil never stirs for them. But preach Jesus Christ—say that His Kingdom is at hand, proclaim that He is come to save the lost and that whoever believes in Him shall live eternally—in a word, preach up Christ, and you soon preach down the devil! He does not come down by slow degrees. He falls, like lightning, from Heaven! You have seen lightning—you may have seen it in that great storm a fortnight ago—it took no time at all to come down from Heaven! Just a flash and it was here! So, where the Gospel is preached with Divine Power, Satan comes down from his throne in human hearts and human minds as rapidly as the lightning flash falls from Heaven! And when we see his kingdom shaken, then, like Jesus, we rejoice in spirit.

Still, I do not think that I have hit the center of the target yet. The Lord Jesus deeply rejoiced in spirit because of the men by whom this work had been done. What sort of men were they? Upon this I shall have to dwell a little further on. But there was this about them—they were glad to have been put into the King's commission. "The seventy returned again with joy." They had never been so happy before—this doing of the Lord's will had been a great delight to them! You could see it by the very spring of their feet and the flash of their eyes. They came back to their Master, delighted, and Jesus caught the contagion of their joy and He rejoiced in spirit! People who serve Christ, willingly, who feel a delight in doing His will, are sure to bring delight to Christ's heart. Are you, dear Friends, in your holy work, doing it with joy, or do you serve the Lord because you cannot help it, like slaves driven to their toil by the overseer's lash? Jesus cannot rejoice over you if that is the case. But if you can say, "I delight to do Your will," then you will make His heart rejoice!

He rejoiced in these men because, when they came back, having done wonders, they ascribed it all to Him. They said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name." They did not begin to pilfer the Glory and take the

honor to themselves. Christ is glad to have a people who lay all the honor where it ought to be laid, and put the crown on the right head. I believe that there is nothing that angers Christ more, in His ministers, than to hear them talk about what they have done, without duly ascribing all the Glory to Himself. When they do ascribe it to Him, then Jesus rejoices in spirit.

But He rejoiced most of all that, of all these seventy, He could say that their names were written in Heaven. It is an easy thing to become a preacher, or a teacher, an evangelist, or what not—but are our names written in Heaven? As Christ would have us rejoice most over that, no doubt He rejoices most over it when He sees that we not only have our names written down in the Clergy List, or our denominational Handbook, but that our names are really written among the living in Zion—those who are quickened by His Grace, washed in His blood and truly made to live by His Spirit! "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." I have shown you the occasion of His joy. When you have similar occasions, dear Brothers, dear Sisters, mind that you rejoice in spirit, too!

II. But now, secondly, WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S JOY? Jesus rejoiced in spirit."

The answer to this question is, first, that it was spiritual joy. There is a good deal of joy in the world, even among religious people, that could not be called spiritual. I am not certain whether all the expressions of joy one hears at some excited meetings are worthy to be put on the same heap with this joy of Christ. There is mental joy. There is a sort of physical joy, when one gets excited and stirred up—this is but bronze or silver—but spiritual joy is the gold of joy and the gold of that land is good! If, down deep in his inner life, one's spirit can rejoice in God, he is the man who is like his Master when He rejoiced in spirit!

You who have the Revised Version, which often teaches us much, will, I dare say, be surprised to read in the margin the following rendering, "In that same hour He rejoiced by the Holy Spirit." That is a very remarkable rendering, and I think a correct one. That is the kind of joy that Jesus had, joy worked in Him by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was poured upon Him without measure and, as part of the fruit of the Spirit is joy, the Spirit gave Him much joy, as well as much love. Beloved, pray God to give you joy by the Holy Spirit! All the other joy in the world, if heaped up together, would be only so much smoke and vapor! But joy in the Holy Spirit is solid bliss and lasting pleasure. Here you have the great ingots of joy. How ponderous they are, how precious they are, how immeasurably valuable, how infinitely beneficial! Joy by the Holy Spirit—often very calm and quiet, for, "He leads me beside the still waters"—but a very wonderful joy. The joy of God, like the peace of God, which passes understanding—this is a joy which passes all measure or bound. That was the joy of Christ—spiritual joy and joy by the Holy Spirit.

Notice, also, that it was joy about others, a perfectly unselfish joy. Jesus had seen others blessed, healed, prepared, instructed, made ready to hear more of the Gospel—and He rejoiced in that. And He had seen others made useful. Oh, what a mercy it is when you can rejoice in other people's usefulness! Did God ever bless you very largely and did there come along somebody whom He blessed more than you? Now, I am sure that you rejoiced in that other man's success if he was a hundred miles off! But I am not quite so certain that you rejoiced in it if he came into your Sunday school and had a class that took some of the scholars away from you. I am not quite certain that every minister in the world would leap for joy if a Brother settled close beside him and had twice as large a congregation as he had, and did 10 times as much good. Hearts need a little schooling at such a time as that, for, as the stars love to shine, they sometimes like not only to shine out but to outshine!

Now shine out as much as you like, but never mind about outshining, for that is emulation of a kind of which Christ will never approve. He rejoiced to see the 70 shining. He delighted to see them all useful. Pray for your Brothers and Sisters, that God may make them more useful than they are and more useful than you are. Did not your Lord say, "He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do, also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father," as if it were a delight to the Master that His pupils should, in some respects, excel Him? Remember Moses, when they came to him, and said

that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp? Those two fellows had not been properly ordained, yet they were prophesying in the camp! What did Moses say? "Stop them directly. They have not, 'Rev.' before either of their names and certainly they have not D.D., or any of the other letters of the alphabet after their names! Shut those fellows up"? No, no! Moses said, "Would God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" And is not that what Christ would say and have you say? Oh, let us have joy in our

hearts when souls are saved, even though we may not be the instruments of their salvation, or any of our denomination, but somebody quite apart from us! God has blessed him and God be blessed for blessing him!

Our Savior's joy, again, was quiet and devout joy. "Jesus rejoiced in spirit." I do not find that He sang a Psalm, or even a hymn from Moody and Sankey, or that He took a timbrel and danced. I think it would have been very much out of place for Him to have done that—for Him it would have looked very eccentric. But our Savior, when He rejoiced in spirit, prayed and thanked God. The same calm which had sustained Him in His seasons of sorrow, supported Him in His hour of joy and kept Him sober, still, quiet! The Lord give us much of this joy! Still waters, you know, run deep. Let me also say that deep waters run without turmoil. When the river is very deep, there will not be half as much noise as when it is but shallow and, therefore, rattles and raves over the stones which it barely covers!

Christ's was quiet and devout joy and it was also meek and lowly joy. Though He rejoiced in spirit, what He said was, "I thank You, O Father." There was no assumption, no taking of anything to Himself. Did not He send out the seventy? Were they not called by Him? Yes, but He said, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth." Perhaps God would give us more joy if we were more meek when we had it, but, sometimes, when our heavenly Father trusts us with a few jewels, we hang them in our ears and are as pleased with them as children with new toys—and we forget our Father and only remember how pretty we look—as we think. Then the Lord takes them away again. Many a child would have more sweets to eat if they did not make him sick. Many a preacher of the Gospel would have more success if it did not make him proud—and many a laborer for the Lord would bring more souls to Christ if there were not danger of his losing his own soul if he were much honored in that way. Our Master, when He rejoiced in spirit, was as meek and as lowly as when He stood before His adversaries and was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

III. But I must not detain you much longer and, therefore, I come to the last point which is the special one upon which I want to dwell at this time. WHAT WAS THE EXPRESSION OF OUR SAVIOR'S JOY? When Jesus rejoiced in spirit, how did He show His joy?

Well, He showed it, first, by thanks to His Father. He said, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth." Oh, that our joy might never take the form of a foolish song, but might always be in the shape of thanksgiving or thanks-living, or both of them together—a happy combination— thanksgiving with the mouth and thanks-living with the life! Our Savior, I say, praised God when He felt joyful. Do you not think that that should be a lesson to us to try to be joyful before we praise God? Do you feel very dull and heavy? Well, sing! Remember that the Apostle James said, "Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms." Psalms are best sung when the heart is glad, therefore seek to shake off your sadness when you come into the House of God! And before you begin to praise the Lord, endeavor to be joyful, cheerful, happy. Did I not say, the other day—"Do not leave your bedroom until you feel that everything is right between you and God"? I would also add to—"Do not begin to sing until your heart sings." Try as much as possible to be glad. Does God want slaves to Grace His Throne? It is the heathen who cut themselves with knives and

think that their god is pleased with their misery! But our God delights in the joy of His people. Be glad before Him. "Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms." Sing unto the Lord all you people and rejoice before Him. The singing of God's praises should be accompanied with joy—and when there is joy it should be attended with the singing of His praises.

But why does Jesus Christ thank God? What is His special objective in thanking Him? Well, He thanks Him for a great Truth of God that some of you do not like. I cannot hide it, whether you like it or not. Jesus thanks His Father for the Doctrine of Election—"I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight." With whom does the choice of men lie? With God! And in His choice His Son greatly rejoices! So let it be with us—let Him do what He wills, and let us rejoice in Him! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Let Him do whatever He wills, I know that it is right. It is not for us to judge God's conduct, but to let God's conduct be to us the rule of our life, the rule of right—

"He sits on no precarious throne, Nor borrows leave to be,"

nor does He stand at your bar, or mine, to ask us what He shall do, or what He shall not do. "He gives not account of any of His matters." And over the head of us all there rolls the thunder of this Word of God—"I will have mercy on whom I

will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." No claim can be set up by the creature! None have any merit whatever before Him and, therefore, with that absolute Sovereignty which He claims as God, He distributes His favors according to this rule, "Shall I not do as I will with My own?" But many hearts cannot bow to that Law of God—the iron sinew of their neck will not bend to a God who is God! A nominal god is all very well, but a real God of Infinite Power and Divine Sovereignty is rejected by many, but not by His dear Son! He says, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth." We who truly know the Lord, adore the God of electing love! He cannot do wrong. He must be right. And if He chooses to let the wise and prudent be blinded, while He opens the eyes of babes, we thank Him. What we do not understand, we accept with reverent adoration.

The Savior especially thanks His Father for the chosen ministers round about Him. Somebody might have said, "Why, these 70, You are their Leader, but they are a precious poor lot! Look at them! Put the whole 70 together and they would not make one man of the size of a Pharisee, either in property, or in propriety, or in power to boast and say that they have kept the Commandments from their youth up! Why, they are a parcel of sinners, the whole 70 of them! And besides that, look at their coats—nothing but working-men's jackets. There is one of them, Peter, who has an extra coat, but he is only a fisherman. What a lot they are! And these are the men who are to proclaim the religion that is to conquer the world? It is certainly not abreast of the times—it is not up to the modern thought of this period—very far from it! All that it has gathered is a parcel of poor, illiterate persons."

Well, the Savior thanks God that He has not given Him any wise men. He thanks God that He has not saved any of the people who think that they have great understanding. He congratulates Himself that, upon the whole, He has the people He likes best—"I thank You, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto"—what? Well, He says, "babes." They cannot say anything worse than that of the Lord's chosen ministers—just a lot of babies! Jesus thanks God that He has revealed the Truth to these babes and so do I! Oh, Beloved, what a mercy it is that the Lord does, by His Grace, call these babes, while the wise men, and the understanding men are not called!

Suppose the very wise and prudent had been called to go and preach? What would they have done? Why, in the first place, they would not have gone at all because any prudent man would have said, "He sends us forth as lambs in the midst of wolves! That is not prudent, so I shall not go." Certainly no wise men would have gone upon such an errand—they would have said, "No, thank you." And so you still find the wise and prudent. They will not go on Christ's errands. They have errands of their own—they have plenty of their own work to do—they are going to reform the world by their own inventions! But to go on Christ's errands and simply to say what Christ tells them, oh, no, not they! They have such a lot to say of what they have made out of their own heads that they cannot go out to simply repeat what Christ has said to them.

Suppose, again, that the 70 had been wise and prudent men? What next would they have done? Why, they would have tinkered the message, for certain! There is one of them who would have said, "Well, now, I am going, you see, to a town of very respectable people—I must tone my message down for them." Another would have said, "I am going where they are rather a democratic set—I must introduce a little bit of politics of a popular kind to suit them." Another would have said, "Well, now, these people will not come and hear me preach the Gospel, so I shall have an entertainment, a penny reading, or something of that kind." All the wise and prudent would have thought that they could do better than Christ told them to do—therefore He was very glad that He had not any of them to pester Him! He had only these who would do just what He told them and say just what He told them—and that was exactly the kind of people that He needed—men who would do His bidding without question.

Then, besides that, if they had been very wise and prudent, they would have inevitably clouded the message, for they would have delivered it in their own grand style—and you know how wise men talk, do you not? Unless you are a very wise man, you cannot understand them. But these poor babes, when they went into a town, talked as the people talked, and everybody could comprehend them! Nowadays, it is thought to be an evidence of lack of education if you talk so that everybody can understand you, but, dear Friends, we are not afraid of what anyone says on that point. Depend upon it, the best education in the world is that which enables you to convey your thoughts to other people's minds in a way in which you really get them into their brains! These babes went and preached what Christ told them because they did not know anything else. They were men of plain speech—they were Galileans! They had never learned the scholastic style of speech—Galilee was a notable place for spoiling the language! These were rough-hewn men and they spoke out their

message with all their might—and Christ was very thankful that they were not other than they were, for they did His work right grandly.

Besides, I think that if they had been wise and prudent, they would not have come back rejoicing—they would have come back with that cold propriety which is most consistent with the dignity of cultured intelligence! Are you not all aware that it is vulgar to be happy, that it betrays the feebleness of your minds if you enjoy anything? The proper thing is to pick the Truth of God to pieces and find all the fault that you can with it. When the Bread of Heaven is set before you, if you are a cultured person, you should not eat it, but try to find out who baked it and whether they put as much yeast in it as usual. Such people always quarrel with the Truth if they can. Sometimes I take up a commentary on some part of the Bible and think that I am going to learn something. And so I do. And when I have learned it, I wish that I had never seen it! A vain attempt is made to take the juice out of God's wheat and to reduce it to dry, useless husks which cannot cheer the heart, or comfort the spirit. I thank You, Lord, when I get away from these gentlemen, even as You did thank Your Father that there were none of them around You. They would have been almost enough to chill the very life of Christ, Himself.

Once more, if they had all been wise and prudent, they would have come back, every one of them taking a little of the praise. One wise man would have said, "I put that point beautifully down at Chorazin." Another would have said, "I drew a wonderful distinction down at Bethsaida." "If any good comes of this," another would say, "it was that wonderful peroration of my discourse that did it. I must have the credit of it." These poor babes could not think or talk like this, for, if God did anything by them, they were such nobodies that He must have all the Glory!

Now I have done when I just say to you that I wonder whether this brings comfort to you? One poor soul says, "I am not clever. I cannot be saved." Why not? Why not, when God has chosen the foolish things of this world? I often hear a person say, "But I have not head enough for these things." You do not need a head so much as you need a heart, for the Grace of God works on the heart, first, and on the head, afterwards. When the head drags the heart, it is often slow work, but when the heart goes first and the head follows, then it is a blessing, indeed! If you love Christ and trust in Him, you have all the head that you need for Eternal Life. "O," says one, "but I am a person of such small capacity!" Never mind. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" whether they are of large capacity or small capacity.

Have you a teachable spirit? Are you willing to believe what the Holy Spirit reveals? Are you willing to sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him? Are you like the babe that does not doubt its mother, but takes, unquestioningly, the nourishment she gives? If that is so, you are of the kind that God has chosen! Come at once to Him. You cannot understand all mysteries if you need to do so. Give up all your vain attempts to sweep the cobwebs from the sky, or to climb up among the stars. Oh, the questions that people can ask you when they really do not want answers, and if they did, would never receive them! I know some who are lost in their thoughts—

"Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute" or some other tremendously knotty question. Why do you get out of your depths? Be a babe and come—simply believe yourself to be a sinner and trust Christ as your Savior—and you will know more than all the philosophers can ever teach you! Come and trust the Lord Jesus Christ and you will find how true it is that He has revealed these things unto babes.

Are you willing to be what Christ was? He was the childlike Man. He is called, "The Holy Child, Jesus." Will you be a child to Him and let Him be a Man for you? Will you take His Book and believe it as you read it? Will you take Him and trust Him as you find Him? Will you take His Cross and rest upon it as your only hope? Then, blessed are you, for you are in the election of Grace! You are one of those whom God has chosen and for whom Christ thanks Him that He did choose people of that quality! And while Christ thanks God, you may thank Him, too, and go home tonight rejoicing! If you are too wise, too clever, too critical to trust Christ, there is no other way to Heaven—so you see where you must go. The Lord change your foolish opinion and teach your reason, reason—and your sense a little commonsense, and save you, for His mercy's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. LUKE 10:1-22.

Our Lord was about to send out 70 disciples to preach the Gospel. He had already chosen His 12 Apostles. Now there must be 70 disciples, something like Moses had 70 elders to serve under him. Some have fancifully likened these two sets of men to the 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees at Elim, and certainly they were for the refreshment of the people.

Verse 1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, where He Himself would come. They were to go before Christ and be His heralds. What a mercy it is when the preacher knows that his Master is coming after him—when he can hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him! What courage it gives him! He knows that, though it is very little that he can do, he is the thin end of the wedge preparing the way for One who can do everything!

2. Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest. The 70 were very few compared with the many that were needed. There were many loiterers about, then, as there are now, but the laborers were few. There were preachers of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but they were not worth a penny a hundred. But the true laborers, who watched for souls, and preached Christ with all their hearts, were very few. It is the same, today, and, therefore, we are to pray for more laborers. A good minister always desires to see more good ministers. In a trade, every tradesman would be glad if those of the same trade as himself would move to another parish, but in the profession of a Christian minister, the more the merrier! "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest."

3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. "Defenseless, harmless, into the midst of those who would devour you if I did not send you. It would be foolhardiness to go on your own account, but I send you and He who sends His lambs among wolves will take care of them." As I have often reminded you, the lambs and the sheep are very defenseless and yet, after all, there are more sheep in the world than there are wolves. And although it looked as if the wolves would soon devour the sheep, the wolves are extirpated in many a country and the sheep are still prized—and it will be so till the end.

4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes. This time, when Christ sent out the seventy, He bade them take no provision, for they might depend upon the kindness of the people. Afterwards, when He was about to leave His disciples, He bade them take both purse and scrip, for they were going among an unfriendly people. But on this first mission He knew that there was a kindly feeling towards them, so He said, "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes."

4. And salute no man by the way. Eastern salutations by the way took up a very long time—the people saying a lot of fine nothings to one another. Christian ministers ought to be excused from many of the lengthy courtesies of life, but if they are not excused, if they are faithful, they will take French leave to be excused. We have not time for all those pretty things that some people attend to. If we are to win souls, we must go to work like the king's couriers who turn not aside to attend to anything else, but devote all their energies to the mission on which they are sent.

5, 6. And into whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. So that it will not be wasted. Wish well and your well-wishing will do you good, even if it does nobody else good. Our chickens come home to roost. If they are curses, they will come upon ourselves. If they are blessings, they will bless ourselves as well as others.

7, 8. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatever city you enter, and they receive you eat such things as are set before you. The Jewish Rabbis, in their perambulations, were very particular about food. It is said to have been very difficult to find a dish to their taste. This might be unclean in one way, and that

not up to the mark in another—but here the Master exempts His ambassadors from attention to these minor matters. They had something better to do than to be always careful about what they should eat or what they should drink, so He said to them, "Eat such things as are set before you."

9-11. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come near unto you. But into whatever city you enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your

city, which cleaves on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be you sure of this, that the Kingdom of God is come near unto you. We are not to stop and argue—that is no business of ours. We have to tell our message. If men will receive it, we are glad. If they will not hear it, with a heavy heart we turn aside and go elsewhere. Our work is to proclaim the glorious message of mercy through a dying Savior, salvation through the great Atonement. It is our business to proclaim it and leave it—the responsibility of receiving or rejecting it rests with our hearers.

12-14. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgment, than for you. Hearing and rejecting the Gospel is the crowning sin of all. Whatever else men are guilty of, if they have not rejected Christ, they have not yet reached the summit of iniquity.

15, 16. And you, Capernaum, which are exalted to Heaven, shall be thrust down to Hell. He that hears you hears Me and he that despises you despises Me; and he that despises Me despises Him that sent Me. If the messenger delivers His message correctly, and as his Master would have him deliver it, the rejection of it, when brought by him, has the same guilt in it as the rejection of Christ, Himself, and the rejection of Christ is the rejection of God! So Jesus tells us here.

17. And the seventy returned again with joy, Not one of the lambs had been eaten by the wolves!

17. Saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name. Christ had not mentioned that in the commission. He sent them to heal the sick. The casting out of devils was included, no doubt, but it was not specifically mentioned, and this being an extra beyond the words of their commission, they were especially delighted with it! "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name."

18-20. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven. That is a higher privilege than to be master over demons, or to be able to tread on serpents! That day of miracles is past, but the power of the Gospel is a spiritual power the same as before. We still cast out devils. Still are men delivered from the dominion of Satan.

21, 22. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knows who the Son is, but the Father. You know that He is the Son of God. You know that He is Jesus of Nazareth. But you do not know Him, you cannot know Him, as His Father knows Him! He is known in His fullness only to the Father.

22. And who the Father is, but the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him. "Can you, by searching, find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?" No, you cannot. The Son of God must reveal His Father to you, or you will never know Him!

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