

The Mission of the Seventy

by C.I. Scofield

The Lord identifies Himself with His servants, and His mission is to go before them, lifting all responsibility for plan and strategy and result, leaving to them the simple duty of obedience.

Scripture: Joshua 5:13, Matthew 28:20, Luke 10:1, Acts 17:30, Hebrews 10:26

Topics: "Divine Guidance", "Church Mission"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the divine guidance of the Lord's servants, emphasizing the importance of being sent only where He is going and the need for missionaries to rely on prayer rather than frantic appeals. The sermon explores the great principle of divine judgment for those who reject the message, highlighting the universal scope of the church's mission to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. The heart of the lesson reveals the progression of doctrine from the Seventy's warning message to the church's message of immediate and complete salvation, all while emphasizing the Lord's identification with His servants throughout history.

Transcript

(Luke x:1-16.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The servants of the Lord, when divinely guided, will be sent only where He is also going (verse 1). (See below.)
2. The divine rule for obtaining missionaries (verse 2). The church, alas, has largely forsaken this direction, and has substituted for simple prayer to the Lord of the harvest the method of frantic appeal; of enthusiasm, too often of the flesh, induced by great conventions and inflammatory addresses. The lamentable consequences on the mission fields are too sadly well known.
3. A great principle in the divine government (verses 3-16).--The preaching of the Seventy was local and Israelitish in its scope (verse 1 with Matt. xv:24), and their message was simply, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." The preaching of the church age differs in scope and message. Its scope is universal; its message, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

But the principle involved is identical: the alternative to those who reject the message is judgment (Acts xvii:30, 31; Hebrews x:26, 27).

3. The identification of Christ with His messengers (verse 16.)--Surely most comforting. If we, faithfully bearing His message, are rejected, He is rejected. If He patiently bears it, surely we may.

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The mission of the Seventy was local and transitory, and their message was simply one of warning and preparation. Into whatever city the Lord sent them, He was shortly to appear also. The kingdom was "at hand," and the King, already manifested to Israel by mighty works, would soon enter their gates. Neither mission nor message was comparable in scope or power to the mission and message of the church. The Seventy were shut up to Palestine. Not even the Jews of the dispersion were to be sought. Our mission is to "all the world." The message of the Seventy was one of warning: "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Our message is one of immediate and complete salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

But in one important respect both missions are alike--the Lord, in both, identifies Himself with His servants. That is the heart of this lesson: "He that heareth you, heareth me and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."

It is beautiful to note the progress of doctrine, the enlargement and unfolding of truth in the Scriptures. The Seventy were heralds of the King. Their mission was to announce His coming. To refuse them, therefore, was equivalent to saying, "We do not want this King." The affront, the rejection, were not at all personal to the Seventy as men, but as heralds.

But when the great commission was given to the church to go to all the world and make disciples of all nations, a closer identification is indicated: "And lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age" (Matt, xxviii:20). It is not that we are heralds going "before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come," but that He Himself marches with us. And if with us, surely in advance of us, as "princely Leader." When Joshua before Jericho saw a man over against him with a drawn sword in his hand, he demanded of him: "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" he answered: "Nay, but as princely captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." No wonder that Joshua "fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him. What saith my Lord unto his servant?"

The Christian consciousness has sadly failed to grasp the great sense in which the Lord is "with" us "all the days." We have thought of Him as helper--as a kind of reserve force for times when the battle goes hard, and we seem about to be beaten back. That was Joshua's hope as he accosted the Stranger with the drawn sword; he saw in Him a possible reinforcement. Ah, no; he came to go before Captain Joshua; to lift all responsibility for plan and strategy and result from Joshua, leaving to him the simple, restful duty of obedience.

A subordinate Confederate general has recorded in his memoirs the immense sense of relief which came to him when, in one of the desperate battles of the Civil War, General Lee arrived upon the field. Much fighting was still to be done, but the responsibility for all save obedience rested now upon another.

It is a great day for any servant of the Lord when he sees that.

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