

## Proclaiming The Great Gospel

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In the following Scripture passage, Jesus gave specific instructions to the seventy He was sending out to share the gospel:

*“Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’ But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city... He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.” (Luke 10:4-12, 16).*

The Great Commission is not an option. It is a command. It must be obeyed. Jesus had called the twelve, the seventy and today He is calling us to go out and share the gospel with others. The Bible says, “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:38). The laborers must go out in response to prayers. Sharing the gospel is a spiritual work that God has called all of us and God will certainly equip and anoint us if we go in response to prayer. Just as sheep and lambs have shepherds to guide them, our good Shepherd goes ahead of us to lead us every step of the way. He will keep us and protects us all the way in our proclamation of the great gospel.

Today, how do we go about proclaiming the great gospel of Christ? The Scripture passage above gives us the teachings of Jesus as He sends out the seventy. We can draw principles from His instructions and apply them to our time.

### **By Faith – Trusting God (v. 4)**

Jesus begins by telling the seventy not to burden themselves with material concerns when they go out to share the gospel. Likewise, we should free ourselves from all worldly concerns to give ourselves totally to establishing the kingdom of God. Material things should no longer be our main concern. God Himself is our provider. He will provide for our spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and material needs. We need to put our faith and trust in Him. He assures us of His provision of all our material needs: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies on the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you. O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For all of these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things”. (Matthew 6:25-32).

Jesus uses three common things – the birds, the lilies and the grass – to bring home His point that He will be faithful to provide for all our material needs. If He could take time to feed the birds and cloth the lilies and the grass of the field, how much more will He provide for whom He loves. He will provide for all our needs. You may ask: “How am I supposed to go about it?” Verse 33 says: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” When we choose to avail ourselves to serve Him, to share His Word, He will certainly bless us. When we make Him our first priority, we are putting His kingdom first and God will certainly honour our faith.

God has invested the life of His Son Jesus Christ in us. Therefore, we carry in us the invaluable message of Christ that is able to save a rotten sinner and make him a child of God. When we share this message with others and they receive it and accept Jesus as their personal Saviour, God will pour His abundant blessings upon us. God uses us to share the gospel. God’s method is people. When we go about His work, He will give us His strength and sustain us. He will take care of all our needs because He is the source of our supply.

The apostle Paul testifies of God's faithfulness in Philippians 4:11-13, 19: "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Paul's principle of serving was a principle of dependence upon and adequacy in God Himself. He spoke out of His rich experiences in God's grace and provision. Live a life of dependence upon Him. He never fails.

In Luke 10:4, Jesus also said, "Greet no one along the road." He is not teaching us to be rude or impolite. He is trying to portray to us the urgency of the matter. We are to focus our minds in sharing the gospel and not stop and be sidetracked and thus waste time.

The urgency can also be captured from John 9:4 which says, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."

### **The Message Is Peace (vv. 5-6)**

The gospel is a message of peace: "And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15). Nations are seeking peace. International bodies are trying to secure peace. Individuals are looking for ways and means to find peace. Such is the great hunger for peace. But real peace only comes when we have made peace with God, that is, surrender our hearts and lives to Him. Those of us who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour have already found the source of peace. His peace fills and reigns in our hearts and lives and we bring the peace with us to wherever we go and whoever we meet. The gospel is very relevant today because it is a gospel that leads people to the Lord who is the Prince of Peace. Those who have come to know Him will have everlasting peace. Therefore, we ought to go out and share this message of peace with everyone, "having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). However, peace can only be received by those who are made aware of the need and desire for it. When we find a home where the peace of God will be received, we are to share it with those who desire it or else we are not obliged to do so. We can go on from there.

### **House Evangelism**

The seventy were supposed to go from house to house. It was their method of evangelism. It is still God's method. House evangelism is still the best method any church can adopt. Thus, Life Group meeting in homes can be very powerful evangelistic outreaches. They can be like lighthouses in communities. One of their goals is to bring whole families to the Lord through the teaching of God's Word and Christian fellowship. The ultimate goal for evangelism is that whole families be saved. It is God's will that whole families be saved, for the Bible tells us in Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

House evangelism brings stability and security to the families. When a pebble is dropped into the water, the circles formed around it moves out and becomes wider and wider. The family unit is like a pebble at the center of the circle. Through house-to-house evangelism the gospel spreads like that circle, from family to family, widening its sphere in that community. This is also the pattern of the early church: "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42) and "How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicity and from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

It was a biblical pattern to use homes as a base for evangelism so that whole families and those in the neighbourhood may come to know Jesus.

### **The Objective of the Laborer is not Material Gain (v. 7)**

We need to go out in absolute dependence upon God. His kingdom and His righteousness should be our topmost priority. Go with the knowledge that we have a powerful message of peace which the world needs and draw your resources from God Himself. Our labour will not be in vain for God will richly reward those who serve Him faithfully and choose to honour him. When we serve Him fervently, we will be found worthy to receive whatever is given to us. Such confidence is given to us by the apostle Paul when he wrote to assure his co-labourer, Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:17, 18: "Let the elders who ruled well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine. For the Scriptures says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it reads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'" In our service unto Him, we are not to seek personal gains because God will take care of them.

Instead, we are to set our minds on God and the things of God: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things we are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of the earth" (Colossians 3:1,2).

We should also look to the example set for us by Moses who forsook all the pleasures in Pharaoh's court and chose to be identified with God's people: "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

### **Be Hospitable and Adaptable (v. 8)**

We ought to go in a spirit of hospitality. The apostle Peter says, "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." Hospitality is a gift because not many of us know how to enjoy the company of people. Those of us who are blessed with this gift needs to minister to one another and be good stewards of the gift. The apostle Paul in his letter to Titus told him, "be hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled" (Titus 1:8). The Lord Jesus Himself had set us the example of how we should minister to one another: "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). The Lord Jesus serves others in love. We should also do likewise and see God use our special giftings as we go from house to house.

God anointed Jesus as He went about doing good from place to place. If there were sick people in the houses He went to, He would pray for their healing. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Jesus went about doing good to others. When there are sick ones in the houses we go to, we should pray for their healing too. There is no need for us to have the gift of healing to do so because it is God who heals when we pray. Jesus' instruction to His disciples in Matthew 10:8, 9 apply too us too. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts." What we need to do is simply to minister freely to others that which we have received freely from God. God has touched us and given us the power to minister to others. Therefore, we need to do that which we have been told. We need to obey God's Word.

### **Walk Away From Rejecters (vv. 10-12)**

We are to simply walk away from those who reject the gospel. The messenger was to symbolise God's rejection by whipping off the dust of the city. Do not draw them into argument. None of us, on our own, can convert anyone because "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel" (2 Cor 4:4). The only means conversion can take place is when is when the Holy Spirit comes and takes the message of peace and opens their hearts to the Word of God. Conversion takes place only when the Holy Spirit convicts and convert. If they reject the gospel, go from there but continue to pray for them that they will come to know Christ.

### **The Messenger Represents Christ (v.16)**

The messenger is God's representative. When we go to a house and knock on its door, we represent God to them. He uses our hands, mouths and feet to reach others. When we are rejected for sharing the gospel with them, they are not only rejecting us but God. In Matt 10:40 Jesus says, "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me, receives Him who sent Me."

In Matt 25:35-40, Jesus told his disciples: "for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "

Therefore, when we go out and share the gospel, we go as a representative of God. Let us then be faithful in giving of ourselves to evangelism.