*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 31 – November 5

“The Good Samaritan”

**Monday, October 31 Luke 10:1-15**

*“Jesus sends out 72 others”*

At the beginning of Luke 9, Jesus had sent out the twelve disciples that comprise his inner circle of followers. Now, Luke tells us, he sends out 72 others. What they do is only a start, since they are to pray for more workers for the harvest. With conversion comes the responsibility to join the task of sharing the good news. Missions is not a matter of marketing but of the Lord’s directing his people to share faithfully the grace they have experienced.

Such ministry is not easy, for the workers are like lambs among wolves. There is danger and hostile rejection on all sides, requiring the workers to travel light. They should not carry a purse, bag, or sandals. They must not be concerned with the normal affairs of life as other people are; ministry is their priority. They are also to rest in the knowledge that God will provide for them through the hospitality of a welcoming home in which they are to stay while in that town. Their main responsibility is to heal the sick and declare the arrival of God’s kingdom – God’s ruling power in deliverance is coming.

*Though not easy, Lord, I will share the good news with others. Amen.*

**Tuesday, November 1 Luke 10:16-20**

*“The 72 return”*

Jesus places an unbreakable link between himself and his messengers. They are commissioned in such a way that they represent him. For people to hear them is to hear Jesus; for people to reject them is to reject Jesus. People cannot separate Jesus from those who bear his message, and this link extends beyond the 72 to all who faithfully preach his message.

The disciples return filled with excitement at the power they have witnessed. In Jesus’ name, even demons have submitted to them! Such power was exciting to contemplate. Jesus responds by picturing the fall of Satan whose loss of power is evident from what has been taking place. The allusion is to imagery from Isaiah 14:12 and Judaism associated Satan’s end with the coming of the Messiah. Yet such power is not the true ground for their rejoicing. That is, the submission of evil spirits to them is nothing compared to the fact that they are registered among the saved in the Book of Life. Here is the real cause for joy. True and eternal life with the everlasting God is the essence of blessing.

*You have broken the power of evil, Lord, and its end is coming. Amen.*

**Wednesday, November 2 Luke 10:21-24**

*“Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit”*

To underscore the point of the previous verses, Jesus prays a prayer of praise to God. God’s sovereignty sends such blessings to “little children” rather than to the wise and learned. Those of simple faith, not those who rest in their own wisdom, have come to see the blessing of God. He honors those who in simplicity rely on him.

The authority of the Father is placed in the Son. In turn, it is the Son who reveals the Father to others. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). There is a chain of revelation that extends from God through the Son to those who respond and bear the Son’s message. That is why the mission of the 72 was so important and why knowing Jesus is so crucial. As great as the eras of Moses, David, and Isaiah were, they are nothing compared to those who have seen the Messiah. Now, those who have come to the Father through the Son are to share in the task of the Son which is to reveal the Father.

*I praise you, Lord Jesus, for I have come to the Father through you. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 31 – November 5

“The Good Samaritan”

**Thursday, November 3 Luke 10:25-29**

*“Who is my neighbor?”*

Knowing that the Old Testament alludes to the “eternal inheritance” one can possess, an expert in Jewish legal tradition asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus responds with a question of his own, asking the lawyer what he sees the Law saying. The man replies with two commandments, one from Deuteronomy 6:5 (“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”), the other from Leviticus 19:18 (“Love your neighbor as yourself”). Jesus commends the answer. The person who loves God will hear Jesus, come to him, respond to him, and receive eternal life.

The lawyer reads the reply as not answering his question specifically enough. “What is the scope of this call to love the neighbor?” Luke tells us that the lawyer wants to justify himself. Thus, the lawyer’s question is really an attempt to create a distinction, arguing that some people are neighbors, and others are not. The suggestion that some people are “non-neighbors” is what Jesus responds to in his story of the Good Samaritan.

*You call me, Lord, to love you and respond to others in light of that love. Amen.*

**Friday, November 4 Luke 10:30-37**

*“The Good Samaritan”*

Jesus picks a Samaritan for his story because such a person is a “non-neighbor” in the lawyer’s eyes. The expectations in the account are that the priest and Levite are the good guys, who could be counted on to help the wounded traveler, while a Samaritan would be the last person from whom one could assume compassion. Jesus turns those expectations upside-down. The priest and the Levite, pious though they may be, pass by on the other side of the road to avoid serving this man in desperate need, while the Samaritan has pity on the wounded traveler.

Jesus then asks a simple question: “Which of the three . . . was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The lawyer cannot bring himself to identify the man by his race. The idea of a good Samaritan was an oxymoron to a Jew. So he says, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus tells the man to “go and do likewise.” Rather than worrying if someone else is a neighbor, Jesus’ call is to be a neighbor to those in need. By reversing the perspective Jesus changes both the question and the answer.

*Give me eyes and ears for my neighbor, Lord, and a compassionate heart. Amen.*

**Saturday, November 5 Luke 10:38-42**

*“Mary and Martha”*

Martha is clearly unhappy at the lack of help Mary provides in offering Jesus a meal. Anyone who has experienced sibling rivalry can appreciate the tone of her challenge to Jesus, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do all the work . . . ?” Martha anticipates a positive answer to her question. She expects Jesus to come to her aid. Martha is performing a worthy task, but she is consumed with what others are doing. Jesus does not criticize her for what she is doing but for being overly concerned about other’s activities.

Mary emerges as an example of someone willing to sit at Jesus’ feet and fellowship with him as his disciple. There is something tranquil in what Mary does. Often in the hustle and bustle of life, we need to pause for a moment of reflection before the Lord. She has chosen a needful thing, a good thing, while Martha, although also doing a good thing, has allowed the situation to cause her to become worried and upset. Time spent with Jesus is well spent. Discipleship sometimes requires that tasks be suspended so that fellowship with Jesus can be maintained.

*To serve you, Lord, and to spend time learning from you are both important. Amen.*