

LUKE 10

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The sending out of the seventy messengers who were to prepare the way for Jesus is recorded only by Luke. The work of these seventy was only for a limited time, and their office was temporary; but in His instructions to them, Jesus suggested many principles of life which apply to His followers in all ages. He first disclosed the reason why they were chosen; it was because the harvest-field in which they were to work was so great, and the laborers were so few. He also made it clear that before the world can receive the Gospel-message which the seventy were sent to deliver, they and their successors must earnestly pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the field. This is a prayer which all who serve the Master may offer earnestly and at all times, for the work seems to be only begun! Our sympathy with the Master will make us long to see His work accomplished with more speed, and this can only be made possible as larger numbers of laborers are secured.

In order to complete the narrative about the seventy messengers, Luke immediately proceeds to describe their return, in verses 17-20. They came back elated, with the report that even the demons were subject to them. Our Lord replied by stating that in the overthrow of these minions of Satan, He saw the ultimate defeat of the Prince of darkness and all his evil forces; and He went on to declare that He was giving His messengers power over all that might oppose them or threaten to destroy them. Yet He took care to add that their chief joy should not be in their ability to perform these works of wonder; but rather, it should lie in their having played a part in His triumphant cause, and in the assurance that their names were written in the heavenly Book of Life.

At this time, our Lord Himself shared in the happiness of His followers; and He returned thanks to the Father for what He was accomplishing through the humble messengers whom He had chosen, so that the results were a manifestation of Divine power. He also congratulated them upon their great privilege – assuring them that “many prophets and kings” desired to see the things which they were seeing as His servants, and as the instruments of His power; and He alluded to the exalted joy which His followers would feel through all the coming years, as they realized their privilege of serving such a Master and of revealing Him to the world!

The parable of the Good Samaritan was spoken to a certain lawyer who – trusting in his knowledge of the Old Testament, and of its subtle interpretations by the rabbis – came to Jesus, hoping to dispute with Him and defeat Him in

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Jesus sends forth seventy disciples to heal and preach – verses 1-16
- ❖ When they return, Jesus speaks of the blessedness of His disciples – verses 17-24
- ❖ He teaches a lesson of love in the parable of the Good Samaritan – verses 25-37
- ❖ He spends time at Mary and Martha's house in Bethany – verses 38-42

debate. He asked Jesus this question: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He evidently thought that Jesus would prescribe some new formalities or ceremonies, or that He would disparage the Law in some other way. He was startled, then, to hear the Master's reply: "What is written in the law?" This answer robbed the enemy of his own weapon. However, he made a skillful reply; he declared that the Law is summarized in the requirement to love God and man. Jesus again replied, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." There was no shadow of evasion or deception in the statement of Jesus. Perfect love to God and man is surely the way of life; but the problem is, who can show such perfect love? Jesus did not come to destroy this requirement of the Law; but rather, to reveal its complete fulfillment, to secure pardon for those who were guilty of its infraction, and to give power to those who felt their need!

The reply of Jesus not only defeated the lawyer in his attempts to ensnare Jesus; it also smote his conscience. He realized that he himself had never fulfilled the requirement of the Law which he knew so well. Therefore, he attempted to justify himself by limiting the sphere to which the law of love applies. This is always the method that people employ when they seek to save themselves while rejecting the salvation of Christ. No one, in his own power, can fulfill the demands of this perfect law. So we must either secure aid outside of ourselves, and trust in a loving Savior; or else we must devise some way to lessen the demands which the law makes. Hence this lawyer suggested that it is impossible to love *everyone*, even though the law *does* require us to love our neighbor; and so, in order to justify himself, he asked another question: "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with this parable that is known so well, in which the Samaritan showed the true spirit of love. And by this parable, the Savior taught us that our neighbor is not merely the person who lives next door; but rather, our neighbor is every man, woman, or child who needs our help!

Luke's unfailing interest in how Christ and the Gospel have an impact on human life is nowhere more perfectly expressed than by the exquisite scene in Mary and Martha's home in Bethany, recorded in verses 38-42. Both sisters possessed admirable qualities; for both loved the Master, and both longed to please Him. But on this occasion, Martha – in her very eagerness to serve – had overburdened herself in the preparation of an elaborate meal; while Mary, with a better intuition of what Jesus wished, "sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word." This was the one thing that was needful; for although the Master does appreciate all that we undertake for Him, He knows that our first need is to sit at His feet and learn His will. When we heed this one necessary thing, we shall then become calm and peaceful and kindly in our tasks.

Thank You, Jesus, for being our Good Samaritan when we had been beaten and robbed by sin, for You came to us and restored us to life and health! Amen.

