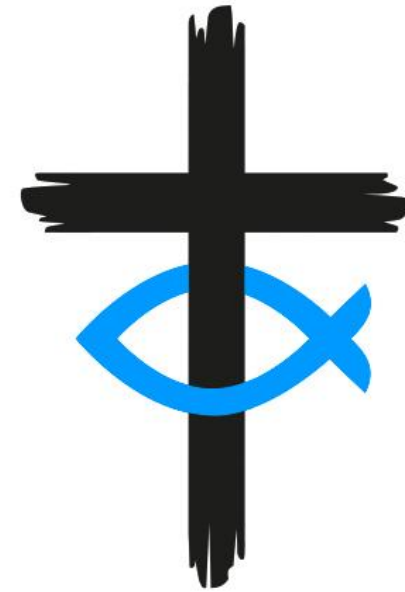


Daily Devotions from the URC

17th – 28th February 2019

St Luke (5)



Introduction

We continue with our journey through St Luke's Gospel.

Andy Braunston

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And not rest until I have made a difference,
For Christ's sake. Amen.



We only feel the force of Jesus' parable when we understand that his hearers expected the priest and Levite to "pass by on the other side"! That was how the two great commandments – the heart of the Law – were interpreted under the Purity System. If push came to shove, loving God (by remaining uncontaminated) took precedence

over loving neighbour. And that meant that the priest and the Levite needed to keep clear of a man who was probably dead: they couldn't come near enough to investigate if they were to be fit to do temple service. Tough for the mugging victim, but that's what God demanded, and everyone understood that.

It's all in the questions. The lawyer thought he knew what loving God meant; the only question was, "Who is my neighbour?" It's a "statute of limitations" question: "how far does my love have to extend?" Jesus asks the lawyer, "Who was a neighbour to the man who fell among robbers?" "The one who had compassion on him!" was the reply. "Go and do likewise", said Jesus.

Compassion is a visceral word. It means, "to be twisted up in the guts with empathy, so that we can't rest until our neighbour's suffering is alleviated". Jesus wants us to understand that compassion mirrors God's own heart. It is compassion, not purity, that shapes God's own actions towards us. If holiness is "being like God", then we are "holy" when we look at the world through compassionate eyes, and "love" when we respond to human need and suffering.

Jesus' point is that we love God by meeting our neighbour's need. The only question is, "How far does your compassion extend?" And that, according to Jesus, is the same question as, "What kind of God do you believe in and claim to love?"

Prayer

Forgive my compassion fatigue, loving God.
 Help me to see the world through your eyes,
 Hear its cries with your ears,

Sunday 17th February Psalm 86

The Rev'd Richard Church, member of Streatham URC, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)

1 Hear, O LORD, and answer me;
 I am poor, and needy too.
 2 Guard my life; save me, my God,
 For your servant trusts in you.

3 Lord, be merciful to me;
 All day long to you I call.
 4 Give your servant joy, O Lord,
 For to you I lift my soul.

5 You, O Lord, alone are good;
 You are ready to forgive.
 To all those who call on you,
 You abound in steadfast love.

6 Hear my earnest prayer, O LORD;
 Listen to my troubled cry.
 7 In distress I'll call on you,
 For in mercy you'll reply.

8 Lord, among the many gods
 There is none to rival you;
 Deeds that others may perform
 Never match what you can do.

9 Lord, the nations you have made
 Will come near and praise your
 name.
 10 You alone are God; your deeds
 Bring to you outstanding fame.

11 Teach me, LORD, your way, that I
 From your truth may not depart;
 So that I may fear your name,
 Give me a devoted heart.

12 Lord, with all my heart I will
 Praise your name unceasingly.
 13 For your love to me is great;
 From the grave you rescued me.

14 Proud men are attacking me;
 And the ruthless men of strife,
 Who have no regard for God,
 Seek to take away my life.

15 But, Lord, you are merciful,
 God of grace and tenderness,
 Slow to anger, rich in love
 And in cov'nant faithfulness.

16 Turn your face towards me, Lord,
 And to me compassion show.
 Give me strength and save my life;
 On your servant grace bestow.

17 Grant a sign of favour, LORD,
 Which my enemies may see;
 Then they will be put to shame,
 For you help and comfort me.

Reflection

This Psalm reminds me of moments of loneliness in the life of discipleship. The Psalmist's voice is the cry of the individual against the ruthlessness of those

around who have no regard for God. Even as I write that, it occurs that sometimes injuries are caused by 'friendly fire', by those within the community of faith as well. Often it is not possible to rehearse these injuries, compounding the sense of isolation as we try to walk Christ's way.

Yet there is something else in the structure of this Psalm which is worth noticing. That is the movement in the Psalm between petition and praise. Thus the deeply personal cry of verses 1- 4 finds a counterpoint in the praise of verse 5. This movement continues through the Psalm. In what way does this help us in our individual walk?

Dom Erik Varden has written of the Shattering of Loneliness by acts of remembrance. That is what the Psalmist is doing here. After each lament come a specific remembrance of the nature of the God in whom hope is placed. It is particularly evident between verses 14 and 15.

God,

Grant me confidence,
That through unseen trials and unheard cries,
You will still quicken remembrance within me of your
Unchanging love and compassion.

I praise you for your faithful purposes,
The riches of your love,
Available to me and to all my fellow travellers,
Lifting us out of the pit of hopelessness,
Free to hope in you afresh,
Making fresh start on our pilgrimage with Jesus,
Amen

[Monday 18th February Betrayal foretold](#)
Anne Brooke, regular attender at URC Elstead

St Luke 9: 43 - 45

While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, 'Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands.' But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was

Prayer

Heavenly Father, may we be child-like
in opening ourselves to the mysteries of your Kingdom,
in accepting that there is much we can never understand,
in joyfully receiving what you choose to reveal.
And, like children may we delight in telling others
of your abundant gifts and blessings to us. Amen.

[Thursday 28th February The Parable of the Good Samaritan](#)

Lawrence Moore, Mission & Discipleship consultant, Worsley Road URC

St Luke 10: 25 - 37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.' But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Reflection

[Wednesday 27th February Jesus rejoices](#)

The Revd. Dr. Gillian Poucher, Minister, Gainsborough URC

St Luke 10: 21 - 24

At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.' Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.'

Reflection

Jesus' response to the return of the Seventy, joyful with the success of their mission, is to offer thanks to his Father. He expresses specific gratitude that revelation of the manifestation of the Kingdom has been given not to those who might be expected to receive it, 'the wise and the intelligent' but rather to the 'infants.' The language is reminiscent of the 'wise' and 'foolish' in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, where those who understand the message of the cross are not deemed wise by worldly standards.

Further, the Son, entrusted with all things, chooses with whom he will share his intimate knowledge of the Father. As he turns to the disciples, telling them how blessed they are to have witnessed the dawn of salvation, their privileged status as recipients of revelation is emphasised by his comment that prophets and kings longed to have witnessed what they had seen and heard. Again, as in the contrast between the 'wise and intelligent' and the 'infants,' we are reminded of the topsy-turvy upside-down world of the kingdom.

We welcome the revelation to the deeply ordinary. We celebrate that it's those who make no claim to be wise or qualified who have insight that the Kingdom has come. But a cautionary note: let us take care if we think we understand the nature of the 'infants' that we don't set boundaries around who might be included according to our own flawed knowledge.

concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Reflection

Bad news. Frightening news. Life-changing news. None of us like receiving the kind of news that Jesus is giving to his followers in this short passage. In fact, we'd probably much rather have fake news than the truth He is trying to tell them. Isn't Christianity supposed to be about the Good News? And aren't we supposed to put a positive spin on everything?

Well, perhaps not. Because there is always going to be both bad and good things in our lives. And sometimes we have to face up to and deal with the bad things honestly if we're going to be the people God created us to be. Here, Jesus is telling His followers that His mission isn't going to succeed and in fact He will be taken from them. How can this be true at the point when everything seems to be going so well? The disciples don't want to understand it and are too afraid to ask. Wouldn't we be the same? I know I certainly would.

However, there comes a point in everyone's lives where we have to be brave enough and trusting enough to bring the negative issues out into the open and ask God for help with them. God is exactly the right Person to ask as He knows every single bad thing we have gone through and every single good thing too. With His help, we can deal with the bad things, and His grace alone can make good things come from them.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to trust You with the pain and darkness in our lives, so that Your grace and power can turn them into blessings. Amen.

[Tuesday 19th February True Greatness](#)

John Ellis, former Moderator of the General Assembly and Secretary of Capel United Church in Kent

St Luke 9: 46 - 48

An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and

said to them, 'Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.'

Reflection

We can be very sentimental about children, especially in churches that do not have any. We think we should treat them as if they are adults and tie ourselves up in knots about how much they understand about Communion.

There is no evidence Jesus was at all sentimental about children. He had younger brothers and sisters and no doubt remembered that children are just as capable of being unpleasant, selfish human beings as those of us in any other age group. But maybe he also remembered two characteristics of many small children that adults tend to honour less.

The first is a willingness to trust even when they do not understand, especially when a parent that loves them is involved. When we try to reduce God to what we can understand, claiming that this is what a scientific age requires, we downsize God until we have an idol of our own construction. We have decided greatness is ours not God's.

The second characteristic is a sense of wonder that flows into what we would once have called reverence. We may not be good at nurturing this but many of us can remember moments when we felt it, long before we could have composed a theological essay. Worship is mechanical without a sense of wonder; but with it worshipping a mysterious and majestic God is possible for all, regardless of intellectual competence.

It should be no surprise that those close to truly great people frequently comment on their innate humility. Whatever hype surrounds them, they know that they are not the centre of the universe. Some of them know who is.

Prayer

Heavenly Father

Save me from infantile responses to today's irritations and challenges.
Thank you for those who will trust me today; help me not to let them down.

Tuesday 26th February [The Return of the Seventy](#)

Dorothy Stewart Courtis, writer and lay preacher, is a member of Wortwell URC, Norfolk

St Luke 10: 17 - 20

The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!' He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

Reflection

The joy of the Seventy is elsewhere translated 'exhilaration' and 'elation'. How often do we see that in our churches - or ourselves? In many a revival, such 'emotionalism' has been frowned on and discouraged. Jesus here does not puncture the joy. First, he validates the experience. 'Yes, I know!' he says. 'I saw the heavenly reality of the earthly work you were doing.' In their teaching, preaching, healing, and driving out demons, the Kingdom of God had confronted Satan and won victories, a foretaste of the final victory Jesus would win on the Cross.

And lest the Seventy thought it was their achievement, in their strength, which surely would lead to many kinds of disaster, Jesus reminds them his is the authority for this work, and the protection. He lifts our eyes from what we can accomplish on our own to his enabling power.

And then he lifts our eyes higher, heavenwards to the heavenly reality of who we are in him and where our true home is, with our name-plate securely fixed. In this we can have hope and joy, whether we are triumphing over our circumstances - or not.

Prayer

'Saviour, if of Zion's city I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in thy name.'
John Newton (1725-1807) Rejoice & Sing, no. 560

Reflection:

We find Jesus issuing judgement on the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida.. This is nothing new, and we are all guilty of proclaiming and believing assumed reputations of so-called places of ill repute. On one occasion Phillip even damned Jesus' hometown (Jn 1.46). But is this what Jesus is actually doing?

We find Jesus comparing the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida to Sodom and Gomorrah. These two Old Testament cities have become bywords for places condemned by the judgement of God. These cities' fate would serve future generations of the consequences of sin (Deuteronomy 29.22-23). And Jesus' condemnation of Chorazin and Bethsaida seemingly places these cities beyond Sodom and Gomorrah in a league of their own.

But Chorazin and Bethsaida were not facing a threat of heavenly fire and brimstone, but Roman fire and fury. These cities were known hotbeds of political rebellion; the Roman solution was not diplomatic dialogue but military suppression. If these cities had repented and followed Jesus, later violence may have been avoided.

Likewise, very real consequences follow the choices we make in our own lives - be these personal or corporate. Walking in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace comes with genuine benefits. If our lives are a statement of rebellion against the Kingdom of God, some form of dark payback may will manifest itself.

Prayer:

So may we choose to follow in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace
May we know the blessings of living a life as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven
May we be mindful of the consequences of living life without reference to God
And promoting this alternative way of life to the people, powers and principalities around us. Amen.

And in the swirl of today's jobs, prompt me to remember the times when I have glimpsed what you are like and been able gladly to put my trust in you for today, tomorrow and all eternity. Amen

[Wednesday 20th February](#) [Another Exorcist](#)

Ann Honey, Church Related Community Worker at Robert Stewart Memorial URC in Fenham

St Luke 9: 49 - 50

John answered, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not stop him; for whoever is not against you is for you.'

Reflection

Jesus' friends have come across someone "casting out demons in your name". It sounds as if they tried to stop him because they thought he was jumping on the bandwagon, or maybe giving himself a status that in their eyes he hasn't earned? They had, after all, just had the conversation with Jesus about who was the greatest – perhaps they were trying to change Jesus' mind? Status was important to the disciples and here was a man using Jesus' name and casting out demons.

Last year the Gospel choir I sing with was asked to sing backing vocals for a Neil Diamond tribute show. I told everyone, because I was excited, that I was singing at the theatre, but I stressed to everyone "it's not the real Neil Diamond though," not because I was disappointed, but because I didn't want them to think it was the real one. Possibly because I didn't want them to think it was VERY important, just a little bit important. I don't think the real Neil Diamond minds too much about tribute acts; after all, they say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, don't they? The tribute actor isn't trying to fool anyone, they know he is a tribute and it will become apparent that while he won't be authentic, he will be almost as good, and the songs will still be the same.

Perhaps that's how Jesus felt – it isn't about status, and those people casting out demons weren't doing it in their own name, they weren't pretending they

were the Messiah - they were using Jesus' name; and apparently it was working.
False prophet – or tribute?

Lord give us discernment
when we are too quick to judge,
be the hand that guides, the love that tempers,
may we know YOUR way
Amen

[Thursday 21st February A Samaritan village refuses to see Jesus](#)

Ann Honey, Church Related Community Worker at Robert Stewart Memorial
URC in Fenham

St Luke 9: 51 - 55

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

Reflection

I wonder how the conversation went between the disciples and the people in the Samaritan village? The Messiah is coming you say? Whose Messiah? Is he staying long? Oh – Jerusalem you say? – well he can't be our Messiah, he's going the wrong way.

For Samaritans, Jerusalem was not their sacred city – they believed the most important, holiest place, was Mount Gerizim.

The disciples, with their passion and faith in Jesus, had expected the Samaritans to welcome them with open arms perhaps?

It's very easy when you are passionate about something, to expect others to feel the same – but unless it is relevant to them, they simply won't. We spend long hours wondering how to take the message of Jesus to those who know nothing of Him, and, like the disciples, are we surprised at their indifference?

In this translation, the Psalm creates a gloriously ecumenical vision where even those nations which, at times, have been perceived as the enemies of God's people, will be counted as fellow citizens of Zion.

Citizens with the same honour, privilege and responsibility, included and counted as belonging, by God.

This Psalm reminds me of the story of Jonah whose hatred of Nineveh was well founded, and yet the story reveals that even these enemies of Jonah and his people, God loved and desired to save and draw close.

“Love your enemies” Jesus said but surely if he knew why they were my enemies Jesus might change his mind... or not?

Whether those who challenge us, fight with us, clash with us, those who make our blood boil or who oppose our values at every turn, are individuals, groups, political parties or nations, they are people God loves, desires to save and to include as citizens of Zion, where God hopes we will all sing and make music together.

Holy One,
May your wisdom of love and grace,
transform my narrow prejudices & perceptions,
so that in my encounters today
I may glimpse the reality & potential of your glorious Zion,
and join in your song. Amen

[Monday 25th February Woe to unrepentant Cities](#)

Daniel Harris, Ordinand, Westminster College.

St Luke 10: 13 - 16

‘Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But at the judgement it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. ‘Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.’

dependant not only on the seventy that go out but also upon those who provide hospitality. As disciples today we have different tasks and responsibilities.

The mission is one of healing and service, churches remain healing and serving communities. We cannot however predict the outcome of our mission, that is dependant upon God alone.

Prayer

Gracious God,
as your disciples,
may you protect us
when we face hostility.

As your disciples,
may we bring healing and peace,
may we know and show your love.

As your disciples,
may we not be dependant on what we have,
but upon each other and upon Jesus alone.
In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

[Sunday 24th February Psalm 87](#)

The Rev'd Fiona Bennett minister at Augustine United Church Edinburgh

1 On Jerus'lem's holy mountain
he has founded his abode.

2 More than all of Jacob's dwellings
Zion's gates are dear to God.

3 Glorious things of you are spoken,
Zion, city of the LORD:

4 "Many drawn from all the nations
as your people I record.

6 "Born in Zion," God will enter in the peoples' register.

7 They will sing, as they make music, "All my fountains are in her."

"I will name as those who know me
Egypt, Tyre and Babylon;
Philistine along with Cushite
I will count as Zion-born."

5 Yes, it will be said of Zion,
"This and that one here belong;
And on her the Highest's blessing
will descend, and make her strong."

The disciples were hurt and angry that the village had been unwelcoming and perhaps sought to emulate Elijah in having it consumed by fire – but Jesus told them no. Indeed; what would that have said about the followers of Jesus that when they are not welcomed, they need to punish, to have their revenge?

Unless we live out our faith and help others to see the relevance of it to them, through the difference it makes to our lives, then the welcome we receive will be predictable!

Loving God, grant us patience,
that we might see how to share your grace with others
and build communities of love wherever we are.
Amen

[Friday 22nd February Would Be Followers of Jesus](#)

The Rev'd Nick Jones is minister of Heswall URC & St. George's URC, Thornton Hough

St Luke 9: 57 - 62

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Reflection

I'm sure that many of you, like me, sometimes have trouble sleeping. Perhaps, like me, you've read up on 'sleep hygiene' and try to follow a set routine to help you sleep well, but still occasionally find yourself awake at 4am pondering the meaning of the Universe. Drawing on this passage, a question you could ponder is 'how did Jesus sleep?'

In the Gospels Jesus is always travelling and rarely stays in the same place for very long, so he would never have known where he was going to be sleeping. He didn't have a set routine. After a long day walking, teaching and healing did he sleep the sound sleep of the just, or did he often lie awake, uncomfortable in a borrowed bed in a strange house, thinking about what he, or those opposing him, would do next? Foxes have holes, birds have nests, but he had no place to rest his head, or at least no regular, known, safe place.

We often build routines for ourselves because they can help us. We like to feel safe, secure and in control. But routine can also lead to complacency. Can any of us honestly say we have never made an excuse when we think we hear God calling us to something new and risky? I certainly can't, or I would have candidated for ministry earlier in my life. It was the same two thousand years ago. The excuses given in this passage for not immediately dropping everything to follow Jesus are pretty good and reasonable as excuses go. I have to bury my father - a requirement according to law and custom. I want to say goodbye to my family - who wouldn't?

And yet sometimes to follow Jesus we need to be ready to break out of our routines, even if it risks losing sleep and pondering ineffable questions as we lie awake.

Prayer

Loving and gracious God,
be with us both in the stillness of the night
when we feel alone with our worries,
and in the noise of the day.
Help us, whenever and however we hear your voice,
to be ready to follow you without making excuses,
and respond to your challenge to help build your Kingdom. Amen.

[Saturday 23rd February The Mission of the Seventy](#)

The Rev'd Dr David Whiting, Minister. Sunderland and Boldon URC Partnership

St Luke 10: 1 - 11

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them,

'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near." I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Reflection

We have already heard about the mission of the Twelve (Luke 9:1-6), now we have the mission of the Seventy (or is it 72?).

In all the Gospels it is an account that is only given by Luke although the charge referring to 'the harvest being plenty and the labourers being few' has its parallels. The commentaries make a number of useful points. Some texts give the number as seventy others seventy-two. The appointment of seventy elders is alluded to (Numbers 11:16,17). Then there is the list of the world's nations, seventy in all (Genesis 10:2-31). So the mission of the seventy is thought by some to prefigure the mission to the Gentiles.

The mission to which the seventy are charged to go will be hard going. They will be facing hostility 'like lambs in the midst of wolves'. They go without money, possessions and even without a decent pair of walking shoes. The way they are to live is much like the way Jesus and the twelve live dependant upon hospitality.

All that being said the story is a reminder that God's mission is not only in the hands of the professionals (the twelve). It is about teamwork, the seventy go out in twos, so each is dependant on another, each are with the other sixty-nine, much like we are dependant upon each other in our churches today. We are disciples together. We are reminded that the success of the mission is