

THURSDAY JANUARY 13

Read: Genesis 10

When reading the Bible we often skip over texts like Gen.10. Too many names! And so hard to pronounce! Yet they are extremely important because texts like these (genealogies) link the Biblical story to people, families, and nations. And, in some cases, they help us understand other texts more fully—like Luke 10!

As Pastor Andrew mentioned on Sunday, the number 72 is likely used both literally and symbolically. The number would seem to symbolically point to all the nations of the world. According to Gen. 10, in the Greek version of the OT, the Septuagint, the number of the world's *nations* is 72. And in some of the Apocryphal writings, that is, books written during the intertestamentary period, particularly in 3 Enoch, seventy-two is the number of princes and languages in the world. And finally according to legend, 72 elders were commissioned to translate the law from Hebrew to Greek, and this project was undertaken in order to win renown for the Jew's and their God throughout the *whole world*. Luke's theological message is that Jesus sends his followers to all the nations of the world.

And in the GVA, the “nations” are at our doorstep! We don't have far to travel!

PRAY: Pray that God will give you / your family an opportunity to build a relationship with those from a different culture. Pray that through this relationship Jesus will use you to “bring near the Kingdom of God.”

FRIDAY JANUARY 14

Read: Luke 10: 17-24, Hebrews 12: 22-24

The 72 return from their assignment overjoyed (proud?) at what they accomplished; “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” This moves Jesus to joy as well (v. 21), for in their report Jesus sees and hears that the Father has sent them with spiritual power and authority to proclaim the Kingdom. As we pray for evidence of that power and authority in our day, we also hear Jesus say, true joy comes from knowing you are children of my Father. The writer of Hebrews says, you're heaven's citizen.

PRAY: Have you committed yourself to following Jesus? If so, thank the Father that your name is written in heaven. If not, “today is the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. 6:2b) Turn your life over to Jesus.

SATURDAY JANUARY 15

Read: Tomorrow's sermon text, Luke 10: 25-37.

Consider coming to morning prayer today in the sanctuary at 6:00AM.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

JANUARY 9-15, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

SERIES: A 'TANGIBLE DISPLAY' PEOPLE: JOURNEYING WITH JESUS IN LUKE
SERMON NOTES: “THE BASICS OF DISCIPLESHIP: MISSION TO THE NATIONS” LUKE 10:1-24
PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK SUNDAY JANUARY 9

A perspective from some Christians in China.

- 1) Prayer is for _____.
- 2) Jesus _____ out ahead.
- 3) What about “72”?
- 4) Jesus expresses _____ and _____.
- 5) We don't like the ‘j’ word: J _____.

KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:



Region to which the 72 were sent, including the towns and villages that Jesus spoke judgment towards.

MONDAY JANUARY 10

Read: Luke 10: 1-24

Read the passage in its entirety. In your own mind or as you discuss it together with your family, what aspect of this story stands out for you? What questions come to mind? What does Jesus mean in v. 11? He uses a figure of speech meaning, “as the dust is separated from my sandals, so too God will separate you from his Kingdom work”; what might that mean for a town or a community? OR, How would the disciples have understood the words, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven?” No doubt you can you think of many other questions? What chief emotion do you feel from this story? Fear, comfort, hope, doubt, joy, longing?

PRAY: Thank God for His Word. Pray that some aspect of this story will strengthen your spirit and be expressed in your life.

TUESDAY JANUARY 11

Read: Luke 10: 2, John 4: 34-38

Many of us living in North America have a hard time believing that the harvest is plentiful. In any given year, many churches see few, if any, adult conversions to Christ; sadly, the church in the West is shrinking.

This is not true in many other parts of the world. I listened to a lecture last week by Dr. Kelly Clark, a philosophy professor at Calvin College who has been lecturing on ethics and virtue in China for the last several years. He said current estimates maintain there are approx. 70 million Christians in China who are part of “house-churches” (non State sanctioned). One writer he quoted estimated that in 30 years time, 1/3 of the Chinese population will be Christian. That’s equivalent to almost a half billion people.

So, maybe Jesus is saying the harvest is plentiful but only in certain parts of the world at certain times in history. Really? Not likely. Perceived receptivity to the Gospel in the Galilee of Jesus’ day wasn’t very high. Jesus warns the 72 that they’ll face opposition—lambs among wolves—and yet, he says, “The harvest is plentiful.”

No, the issue is that the workers are few. Presumably, New West CRC has about 250+ “workers” (depending on how you count them). Or do we? Are you and I the kind of “worker” Jesus refers to? The issue, says Jesus, is not the harvest. “Ask the Lord for more workers!” And so we shall.

PRAY: Pray that we will see with our own eyes, in our own community, an increasingly plentiful harvest. And pray especially for plentiful workers too.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 12

Read: Luke 10: 5, Psalm 122

The psalmist prays for peace in Jerusalem (the name means “city of peace”). In the OT, Jerusalem, the city where God chose to dwell, was to be a place of *peace*. Perhaps it’s *peace* that is at the very core of the Gospel. Peace with God, made possible through Christ’s death, and peace with creation, humankind, and oneself; a full-orbed sense of harmony, well-being, flourishing, captured in the Biblical notion of *shalom*. In Luke Jesus sends the 72 to announce *peace*.

In an essay called “Learning in War-Time”, C.S. Lewis observes that the act of war itself reveals a hunger in human beings for joy and meaning that will not be set aside for even the most difficult of circumstances. We were made for peace, and in war some are willing to die for it. Admittedly, the peace people fight for is often a distorted and shallow peace, but it is still something of the peace Jesus calls the 72 to announce.

Jesus died so that we could have peace. The full-orbed peace that the Bible calls *shalom*. Thank God that someone was *sent* into your life to announce *peace*.

PRAY: Thank the Prince of Peace for announcing peace. Pray that God will use you to be a “peace proclaimer” in the lives of others.