

TELL ME THE STORIES OF JESUS

Perspective

July 3, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – *The Year of the Lord’s Favor* (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favor” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new *possibilities* with God this Lenten season and always.

Reflect on this Scripture:

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 NRSV

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶ And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘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.’

¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” ¹⁸ He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹ Indeed, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and

scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Commentary:

This passage of the commissioning of seventy-two (or seventy) disciples by Jesus to go before him to the places he intended to go and to do the work of the kingdom of God, which is unique to Luke’s Gospel, tells us that even as Jesus made his final journey to Jerusalem from Galilee, he appointed a larger group of followers beyond the Twelve commissioned in 9:1-6. In that sense, this commissioning foreshadows the mission of the early church and establishes the pattern for those who are sent out. Moreover, the number sent out relates to the biblical number of the nations in Genesis 10 and so this points to the mission of the church to the nations which Luke later in 24:47 emphasizes. They were to go in pairs perhaps in keeping with the Mosaic Law (Deut. 19:15) of the credibility of the testimony of two witnesses as well as for practical reasons for supporting one another in the face of the rigors involved in the mission. This reminds us that the mission of the church is not something to be carried out by a few specially called professionals but rather it is to be carried out by all believers.

As Jesus commissioned them for their mission, he also had a discourse with them mentioning about the great need that lay before them, the need for prayer, and that the work would not be easy; the fact that could anticipate positive response but at the same time they would encounter opposition; on how they were to travel, how to enter a home and interact with the people in there, how to enter a town and respond to either welcome or rejection; and in spite of whatever treatment they receive, to keep the focus and proclaim that the kingdom of God has come near. They are his agents who have been given his rights and authority just as he is sent by the Father and has been given the Father’s rights and authority. Therefore, Jesus indicates that whoever rejects them, rejects him, just as whoever rejects him, rejects the Father who sent him. This discourse and commissioning of these disciples along with the Twelve give us a guide for the new model of mission that each generation requires. The expression of the mission of the church in concrete forms and specific activities has changed from generation to generation. However, by principles such as these that Jesus gives, the church can be guided in every generation. The context, means, and forms of the mission change continually, but its basis in God’s redemptive love remains constant.

When the seventy-two (or seventy) return and report their success in their mission, not to mention that they would have certainly met with instances of failure as Jesus informed them earlier, their joy is specially expressed regarding how using Jesus’ name the demons submit to them. To this Jesus lifts the curtain and gives them the view behind the scenes of the spiritual battle between Satan

and the kingdom of God and how by his coming into the world to do the work of the kingdom and his disciples sharing in it, Satan is cast down and this foreshadows the ultimate victory of God and Jesus as God's Son over Satan and all evil. However, Jesus gives his disciples the higher reason for rejoicing, which is not that Satan's power has been broken but that their names are written in heaven. The proper response to the coming of God's kingdom is joy, not only for the defeat of evil and the vanquishing of demonic powers but also for the experience of life rightly ordered in God's fellowship. The disciples have a high status as witnesses, but that status carries a responsibility for how they carry out their task. Their status is given; they were chosen and called. They were commissioned for their work and now they are blessed.

- Adapted from The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol IX, pp. 219-26

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Do you consider that *all* believers in Christ are called by him to be his agents in the world to do the work of the kingdom of God? How would you 'proclaim' the good news of Jesus in your given context?
2. What are the things that you feel can apply to you in the discourse that Jesus has with his disciples when commissioning them and what are the things that don't and why?
3. Does your worldview take into account the unseen conflict between the kingdom of God and Satan? Why or why not and what are the signs that support your worldview?
4. What did Jesus mean when he said, "...but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." How would that happen and is it something that we can take for granted?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Luke 10: 2 NRSV
² He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.