

The Feast of St. Luke, A ✕ D 2009

Luke 10:1-9 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1 Thank God for St. Luke. A Gentile physician, Luke was probably among the seventy-two sent by the Lord to go ahead of Him, preparing the way, speaking peace to the houses they entered. His message and the message of the other seventy-one disciples was Jesus is the kingdom of God, and "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Luke not only wrote the Gospel for which he gained the title of "Evangelist," he also wrote the book of the Acts of the Apostles, the only two books in the canon of Scripture written by a Gentile. He doesn't mention himself by name in either book, and his accompanying St. Paul on one of his missionary journeys would be altogether unnoticed except that in the middle of chapter 16, Luke switches from the third-person "they" to the first-person "we." Luke must've been a faithful, cherished companion of Paul, who, while in prison for the last time leading up to his execution, noted in the Epistle reading, "Only Luke is with me."

2 Thank God for St. Luke. His meticulous attention to detail, his tireless research, his devotion to the Lord Jesus make his account of the Gospel truly a treasure. In addition to recording what he witnessed, tradition holds that Luke also received much

from the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. Luke's account contains the story of the Lord's Nativity that you know so well. He has preserved three of the Church's songs: Zechariah's Benedictus, Mary's Magnificat, and Simeon's Nunc Dimittis. His command of the Greek language is exemplary, and he puts it to use by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to record in beautiful prose the account of the life, death, and resurrection of his Lord.

3 Luke is the man mothers want their sons to grow up to become. Everything he sets his hand to he seems to do well. He is the courageous friend men wish they could be, staying with Paul when all others had departed, until the very end. He is the eloquent and intelligent physician women wish their husbands were more like. But you are no Luke. His love for the Word of God consumed his life; you're lucky if it consumes an hour or two a week. His dedication to the One who sent him as a minister was so great that not even Nero's sword could silence him. Sent like a lamb among wolves, Luke's preaching cost him his head. You're usually unwilling to let apostolic preaching cost you those sins you delight to cling to, preferring to save your head than submit to the headship of Jesus. When wolves surround you, you're more apt to bare your own teeth than your neck, lashing out at spouse, children, friends, to get what you want when you want it in the way you want it.

4 Repent. Luke doesn't want you to emulate him. Like the Virgin source for his Gospel, like the Church whose songs he preserved, like the Holy Spirit who guided his pen, Luke has only one thing on His mind: pointing you to Jesus. It's Luke's account of the Gospel, after all, that records Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, for whose life the Shepherd would give His own, the parable of the coin, for which the woman will search ceaselessly until she recovers it, and the parable of the prodigal, whose Father rejoices

at his repentance and return. Luke is the only evangelist who recounts the story of the sinful woman, likely a prostitute, who washed Jesus' feet with her tears. And it's in Luke's account of the Gospel that Jesus is accused time and time again of dining with sinners. The physician of bodies is called to point you to the Physician of both body and soul.

5 The beauty of Luke's account of the Gospel is not the prose, not the intricately researched history, not the meticulous attention to detail, not Luke's humility. The beauty is the Gospel, the evangel, the good news, the Jesus who dines with sinners, who takes His place among sinners, in fact, who takes their place. Thus all the Scriptures testify that the Christ must suffer, die on the cross, and on the third day be raised from the dead, so that repentance and forgiveness would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. This Gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus, is for you as much as for St. Luke. Jesus welcomes sinners; He was born of the Virgin, lived, healed, drove out demons, raised the dead, died, and rose for the specific purpose of forgiving sins.

6 Peace to your house. The seventy-two went at the Lord's command to prepare for His coming. They preached peace in His name. This is no nebulous peace, no mere greeting. This is the peace every house, every sinner, indeed, every person needs. This peace is the forgiveness of sins, which they called and sent ministers not only to declare but to deliver. The ministers who go out as lambs among wolves tell of the Lamb who went out among wolves. They proclaim repentance in His name, at His instruction. They deliver forgiveness, at His command. Jesus told the seventy-two, "Those who hear you hear Me." The words they speak are not their own but His. "When they called

ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command...when they forgive the sins of those who repent and want to do better, this is just as valid and as certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.”

7 Jesus wants you to hear those words, His “I forgive you.” He sent and continues to send men in His stead to deliver those words. And He continues to send them as lambs in the midst of wolves, with the Body of the Lamb to feed to wolves. The Body of the Lamb of God, the Incarnate Word of God, devoured by death, is for you. His Blood, shed for you, is for you to drink. The Body and Blood of the Lamb make wolves sheep and sinners saints. Everything this Lamb in the midst of wolves did and continues to do is to deliver His forgiveness to you. Thank God for St. Luke, not for St. Luke, but for the Lord to whom St. Luke points you. “For that belov’d physician/ All praise, whose Gospel shows/ The Healer of the nations,/ The one who shares our woes./ Your wine and oil, O Savior,/ Upon our spirits pour,/ And with true balm of Gilead/ Anoint us evermore.”

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria
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