

## CONSIDER THE REWARDS Luke 10:1, 16-24

### INTRODUCTION:

Somebody has written this little bit of doggerel:

*I spent a fortune  
On a trampoline,  
A stationary bike  
And a rowing machine  
Complete with gadgets  
To read my pulse,  
And gadgets to prove  
My progress results,  
And others to show  
The miles I've charted  
But they left off the gadget  
To get me started!*

The gadget to get me started is called: motivation. And that is the gadget to get you started, too. Not only is motivation the gadget to get us started, it is the gadget to keep us going.

The source of motivation for the disciple of Jesus is a vision of the results of doing the Master's will. In Luke 10:1-24, the author of the Gospel records:

**10** *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.*

Then, jumping to verse 16, Jesus told them

<sup>16</sup> *"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."*

Jesus sent out seventy-two of his disciples to be evangelists of his Kingdom. He told them there would be enemies but they were to go anyway. He told them there would be rejection but they were to go anyway. He told them they would not always be successful but they were to go anyway.

So they went. And they experienced all the difficulties Jesus had told them they would experience. But they also experienced great victories. And when they returned, they reported that the benefits were well worth the cost.

<sup>17</sup> *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."*

<sup>18</sup> *He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. <sup>20</sup> However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

<sup>21</sup> *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.*

<sup>22</sup> *“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”*

<sup>23</sup> *Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”*

For those really want to serve Jesus, the gadget that gets them going and keeps them going is their motivation and the source of their motivation is the victory that is assured to them.

In the example of these seventy-two who were tasked with preparing people to receive Jesus, we can see the results that came from their good and faithful service to Jesus.

#### **I. They returned with joy (10:17)**

<sup>17</sup> *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”*

When Jesus sent the seventy-two into the world and into his work, he warned them about opposition, hardship and difficulties. Because of that, I suspect they went out with a certain amount of apprehension and trepidation.

But when they came back, the text says they “returned with joy”. I can almost imagine them falling all over one another to try to get to Jesus first so they could tell him what they had experienced. Breathlessly, in sentence fragments punctuated with adverbs, adjectives and exclamations, they probably interrupted one another until they all spoke at once and, in their excitement and in their joy, they told Jesus that even the demons submitted to them in his name.

There is no joy quite like the joy of doing the work of the Lord. There is no thrill quite like experiencing the power of the Lord. There is no elation quite like seeing Jesus' enemies defeated and his work advanced.

In their joy, seventy-two excited evangelists just couldn't wait to get back to tell Jesus what they had witnessed.

There is an old church song that says, "There is joy in serving Jesus." And there is. Don't misunderstand or get the wrong impression, though. Jesus told them that there would be opposition, deprivation and heartache. There was and there is. But in the end, there is still joy in serving Jesus.

## II. They returned in triumph (10:18-19)

*<sup>18</sup> He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*

I suspect you know that some people have grossly misunderstood the meaning of this passage of scripture. There is a small movement of about 40 churches, centered primarily in the Appalachian mountains and in the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, that believe Jesus gave his true disciples the power to handle venomous snakes and not be hurt by them.

But the snakes don't always cooperate with the religious ceremony. Every few years, news reports will describe how another snake-handling church member has died during one of their religious rituals.

After a recent fatality at such a service, one CNN commentator observed:

*"If a friend invites me to a church service for a special occasion, I will gladly put up with rituals involving lighting candles or burning incense, but I draw the line at snake handling. I expect a snake in the pulpit, but I refuse to attend a service where the parishioners are handling snakes."*

There is no reason to believe that Jesus gave his disciples the power to handle venomous snakes as a party trick or a sideshow to impress and entertain. In the beginning of this section of Scripture, he told the seventy-two that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven and at the end of these verses, he said that he had given the seventy-two the power to overcome all the might of the enemy.

This isn't about snakes; it is about that old serpent, the devil. This isn't about scorpions; it is about Satan. To turn this into a proof-text for all of us to become snake-handlers is to trivialize what Jesus said. He said he was giving the seventy-two the ability to triumph over the enemy of souls: Satan.

When God's people go out in the power of the Lord, proclaiming the message of the Lord, Satan falls before their advance and the very gates of hell will not be able to withstand the onslaught of the disciples of Jesus.

The good news of an assured victory ought to motivate us to get going and to keep going in the work of the Lord. People, **WE WIN!!!**

### III. They returned in confidence (10:20)

*<sup>20</sup> However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

Jesus wanted the seventy-two to get their perspectives and priorities straight so he cautioned them not to be excited about spirits submitting to them. He told them to be excited about having their names written in heaven.

I think this verse may caution us about a temptation that can afflict anyone who is active in the service of the Lord. It can afflict elders, deacons and trustees. It can afflict Sunday school teachers, youth leaders and church musicians. It absolutely can afflict preachers. It absolutely can afflict media evangelists and professional musical groups in entertainer buses.

The danger is that we can be so focused on our area of ministry and on the souls of those we serve, that we forget our own spiritual health. The source of our joy ought not to be what we do for the Lord, it ought to be our relationship with the Lord.

### IV. They returned in understanding (10:21-24)

*<sup>21</sup> At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."*

*<sup>22</sup> "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

*<sup>23</sup> Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."*

Do you remember that we saw that, when the seventy-two returned from their ministry of telling others the good news of Jesus and the way to forgiveness, they returned with joy? In verse 21, we read that it is now

Jesus who is full of joy through the Holy Spirit. For the seventy-two, their joy was in seeing victories over Satan through the name of Jesus.

For Jesus, his joy came from a different cause. Jesus' joy was because the seventy-two "got it". The wise and the learned, the religious and the powerful, the students of the Law and the teachers of the Law: they didn't get it. They never seemed to grasp who Jesus is and what he came to do.

But here were seventy-two ordinary people who were not credentialed and who were not specialists and who were not sitting in committee meetings and council chambers discussing great theological themes with the intelligentsia; and they got it. They understood that Jesus is God, who became a man and lived with men. They understood that Jesus was the long-awaited and promised Messiah who would redeem mankind. They understood that he came to defeat Satan and his demonic host. They got it!

Jesus told these ordinary foot-soldiers in his army of peacemakers,  
*<sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."*

What they had seen had not been revealed to people more gifted than they. What they had heard had not been heard by people more powerful than they. They were privileged to know what God chose to reveal to them.

So how did they come to know what prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had not known? How did they come to receive what kings like Saul, David and Solomon did not receive?

What they got, they received while in the service of the Lord! It was as they were sharing the good news of the Gospel in the name of Jesus Christ that they received insights that had been veiled even from one as wise and as powerful as Solomon, who was Israel's mightiest king and earth's wisest man.

And do you know what? To this day, the deepest insights, the highest wisdom and the broadest understanding come not from a degree, a desk and a doctorate. It comes from the fields of service. It is as we do the work of the Master that we come to know him more and love him more. Anyone who waits to serve Jesus until he knows the answers to all of his questions, will never serve Jesus. Anyone who waits to do the work of the Lord until he can win every argument and master every situation, will never work for the Lord. The seventy-two returned with understanding because they went in humble service.

**CONCLUSION:**

I said earlier that motivation is that which gets us started and keeps us going. Motivation is fuel for the mind, for the heart and for the soul. When the motivation dries up, the energy is gone and the work stops.

Church: Clay City Christian Church, we need to fuel up and get busy with the work of the church. We need to fuel up and get busy with the work that every Christian is supposed to be doing.

The United States men's relay team failed to reach the Olympic final for the first time since 1912. The U.S. women missed for the first time since 1948.

In the men's race, things were going smoothly for the United States through the first two legs. But when Darvis Patton closed in on Tyson Gay and Gay reached backward, they couldn't connect. Patton made a final lunge to get the stick to Gay before he ran out of the passing zone, but as Gay's hand closed, the stick wasn't in it. It bounced off the rain-slickened track, and the crowd gasped.

The women were also in good shape heading into the final exchange, but Lauryn Williams didn't receive the baton from Toiri Edwards. It fell to the ground as Edwards yelled and covered her face with her hands. Williams went back to retrieve it and finished the race -- but the Americans were dead last.

From my track days in school, I know that those transfers are critical. Races are won and lost in the transfers. So our relay teams practiced the transfers repeatedly.

People, souls are won and lost in the transfers. For the Christian, the race of life is not a sprint. It is not even a marathon. It is a relay and we **must** pass the faith along.

***[AUDIO CLIP "Passin' The Faith Along"]***

The relay is worth the work because of the many rewards if we get it right.

**INVITATION:** #444 – *"I Love To Tell The Story"*