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PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL THE MASTER'S WAY

BY

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Big ideas thrive on a clear goal. For Christ, He came with love to slay sin for life to reign. That pretty much sums up Christ's mission on earth. He came to save sinners as conveyed in His name – YESHUA – and reaffirmed in several statements of His: 'I came to call sinners to repentance' (Matt. 9:13); 'I came to save that which is lost' (Luke 19:10). In this great mission of Christ, the Apostle Paul rejoiced: "...Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). The business of Christ is about saving people from the stranglehold of sin into the Kingdom of God.

But it's a responsibility He shares with His disciples. We are co-workers with Him, and we have been endowed with grace to be fruitful (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1-2). As the Father has sent the Son, so has the Son sent us (John 20:21). It therefore follows that as He obeyed the instructions of the Father who sent Him (John 8:29), so we too are to obey His orders. He's the Master Preacher and Soul-winner, and it's the rules (of evangelism) that He has set for us that we must follow in proclaiming His gospel.

"How shall they preach except they be sent?"

The instructions set out in Luke chapter 10 for the 70 disciples He sent throughout Israel constitute benchmarks against which to assess our own evangelistic activities carried out in His name. we read:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come" (Luke 10:1).

So, first, the evangelist must be "appointed" and "sent" by the Master into the communities ahead of His personal arrival. No employment under authority is by self. The authority, who may be the business owner or proprietor or manager, is the one who engages and appoints staff. How sad then to realize that it's probably only in the spiritual field of the ministry or evangelism that people engage themselves without being appointed and sent by the Master! These merely go "in His name" without being called, anointed and sent by Him.

Nevertheless, He's not taken aback; neither should we. The Master foreknew them and condemned them in advance. They would come in His name but would not speak His words (Matt. 24:4-5; Jer. 23:21-22; 14:14). Which is to be expected, for "how shall they preach except they be sent? As it

is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom. 10:15).

In the absence of the true gospel because the purported preachers have not been sent, they preach fables to a ready audience enslaved to their own lusts (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

But as there’s a counterfeit, so there is the genuine! The Master to this day appoints and sends out true ministers of His anointed by Him to preach His gospel of salvation.

“Two by Two”

Back in Luke 10:1, we saw that the Master sent the preachers He appointed two by two (not in singles) into every community He Himself would later visit.

The work of an evangelist is not necessarily a ‘lone-ranger’, solitary sort of work. At least, the Master didn’t idealize it this way. At the very least we must move and work in pairs. Thus Paul and Barnabas headed off into the Gentile communities after the Holy Spirit consecrated them and sent them away. We read in Acts 13:

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus” (vv. 1-4).

The two (Paul and Barnabas) went on an extensive evangelistic tour of Asia Minor visiting city after city, community after community, both Jewish and Gentile, “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21; cp. 26:18, 20). It was a round trip which brought them back to Antioch where they had begun following the recommendation of the Holy Ghost:

“And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled” (Acts 14:26).

Even when Paul and Barnabas, who had until now worked harmoniously, strongly disagreed over the new threesome arrangement to include John Mark as proposed by Barnabas, the pairing continued – only in double pairs: Barnabas took Mark and Paul chose Silas (Acts 15:36-41).

So then, even when we disagree over personal opinions and go our separate ways, we cannot afford to strike out on our own. It’s advisable to go “two by two”.

This is not to say, however, that Christ cannot use an individual to preach the gospel without anyone accompanying him. Christ is not limited to the use of pairs. If He could give the power of

speech to a dumb ass, He could use a human being in a much more powerful way to accomplish His purposes!

And He did use solitary evangelists to impact souls mightily. Deacon Philip, the Evangelist, stands tall in the class of solitary evangelists.

Driven out of their Jerusalem base due to persecution, the early disciples, who were dispersed over the regions of Judea and Samaria, were more or less forced to preach singly rather than in pairs or groups (Acts 8:1-4). It was amid “this great persecution” against the Jerusalem Assembly that Philip, having fled the city of Jerusalem, “went down to the city [or town] of Samaria [who were of mixed Israelite-Gentile racial background, 2 Kings 17:24-27] and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:5-8).

There was only one preacher, a preacher “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (Acts 6:3, 5), and the impact was huge. “There was great joy in the city” because the Master was there with Philip by His indwelling Spirit!

On hearing that Samaria had received the Word, the Apostles *Kefa* and *Yochanan* followed up with a visit of their own and ministered to them for them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

One evangelist prepared the ground by sowing the Word amid the demonstration of God’s supernatural power of deliverance, and the apostles, higher in church authority, built on it to bring it to a good finish.

Not long after, this same Philip was sent by the Lord (by the mouth of His angel) to meet “a man of Ethiopia”, a high official of Queen Candace of Ethiopia “who had the charge of all her treasures, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, and was returning. When he caught up with the Ethiopian official in his chariot, he led him to Christ based on a passage of scripture he was reading from the scroll of *YeshuYahu* (Isaiah). As they journeyed on, they came upon “a certain water [river], “and he baptized there and then. “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea” (Acts 8:26-40; cp. Acts 21:8).

And so if you feel moved by the Lord to go on a solitary evangelistic assignment, do so. You are alone but not alone. The Master is with you in spirit, and He will demonstrate His presence by miracles, signs and wonders to confirm the Word.

But let’s keep in mind that if you have a willing agreeable partner, it’s always better to go in pairs, for “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Eccl. 4:9-10).

The Master's words vindicate this, while the successful evangelistic partnership of Paul and Barnabas (and later Paul and Silas) proves it.

The World is the Stage

The evangelistic mandate is to go into "every city and place". The instruction is clear: don't be selective, don't discriminate among communities. There's a soul, or souls, to be saved in every city, town and village; sinners to be turned to righteousness in every community and the perishing to be rescued in every place. This was what drove the missionary programme of the Master Himself:

"And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43).

We can't rest on our laurels, contented with the places we have so far preached in. No, we can't afford to! The deceiver hasn't stopped his work of deception and of destruction of men's souls. In fact, he's working extra hard because time is running out for him. (Rev. 12:12).

So why should we slow down? It's an absolute necessity we redouble our efforts. The ill consequences of not reaching every community with the true gospel are simply imponderable. It's a matter of people living in utter darkness; it's a matter of souls living in sin and delusion, left in the firm grip of the destroyer; it's a matter of souls doomed to eternal damnation. It's hell that has opened its mouth wide to swallow hapless souls in their millions, if not billions:

"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it" (Isa. 5:14).

That's why we must "by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). The Lake of fire has opened wide its mouth, and we must not abandon its victims to their fate. We must do everything within our power to save the perishing:

*"And of some have compassion, making a difference:
"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:22-23).*

Harbingers of His Coming

The preachers the Master sends herald His own coming. They go ahead of Him into the communities He Himself would later visit (Luke 10: 1c).

In all probability, the original hearers (disciples) would have understood His pre-announced follow-up visit to mean a later physical visit to build on their work, though there's no indication in the account that He later did actually enter the communities He sent them into. What we learn later on in the text is that the seventy disciples reported back to the Lord, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name" (Luke 10:17).

That could well have been what He meant by His follow-up visits as they evangelized the communities in pairs. For He Himself was with them in spirit, and the proof was that demons submitted themselves to the disciples through His name!

And sure Christ was there with them. Indeed, He revealed to them that as they confronted the demons of spiritual oppression and sicknesses in His name, He was with them in the spirit and gained the upper hand: Satan fell from the sky like a lightning bolt:

“And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (v. 18).

This fall from heaven is akin to Satan’s original fall from heaven when Michael crushed his rebellion against God and banished him to earth (Rev. 12). It’s a pattern repeated every time we carry out the Master’s order to preach the gospel of truth! On each occasion, Satan falls like a lightning from his height of oppressive rule over people’s lives to the ground at the mention of the name of *Yeshua* (Jesus) to effect deliverance and set people free. Satan falls; he loses his evil power over people’s destinies because the Master is there in spirit. We simply have to go ahead of Him, and He will join us later and subdue the demons of oppression!

But He not only shows up to suppress demons but also to make a complete success of the evangelistic work. Without His active involvement, the work can at best be only half done – the people will just hear but with no real transformation.

In this sense, evangelists play the preparatory role of John the Baptist: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Luke 3:4). They prepare the way of the Lord by preparing the hearts of the people by way of repentance (Luke 1:17).

Then the Master comes in and completes the process. He will come and make His abode in the prepared hearts of the people (John 14:23) – by baptizing them with His purifying Spirit of fire. As John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan river, he said to the people:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:11-12).

So there’s no doubt the preachers He commissions and sends out only prepare the ground for His triumphal entry into the hearts of the contrite. He shows His presence by confirming the Word preached with signs and wonders and by melting disobedient hearts of stone by His transformative Spirit of fire, making them obedient.

But how could these ones have believed and repented, in the first place, if not for the preacher? Thus the Apostle Paul asks:

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14).

Great Harvest, Greater Lord

The harvest – the work of saving souls to which the preacher has been called – is great, but then the resources are guaranteed upon request.

As followers of Christ who have been tasked to preach the gospel of salvation, we have not even begun to appreciate the sheer magnitude of the work. It’s a worldwide operation spanning nations, cultures, generations and social classes. Millions of souls need to be reached. It is a work which demands massive injection of time, effort, sacrifice and resources.

Preaching the gospel is a call to fulfill the Great Commission to preach the gospel to “every creature” – every human being – on the face of the earth (Mark 16:15). The decree of heaven is that in these last days, all humanity everywhere ought to repent “Because He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the death” (Acts 17:30-31; see also Rom. 16:25-26).

It’s an all-important work that can’t be abandoned or neglected by us. Although the available resources (“labourers”) are few in proportion to the workload, we shouldn’t let the mind-boggling magnitude of the task intimidate us. Let’s take it up to the Master in prayer. He’s more than able to provide us the personnel and other resources needed. He’s not lacking in any of the resources we seek: wisdom, knowledge, divine spiritual gifts, health, strength, co-workers, money, and even the stamina to keep going and going! He’s able to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory (Php. 4:19). Through Him we can do all things (Php. 4:13). During the last supper, He asked the disciples:

“...When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing” (Luke 22:35).

So we have no fear of lack as we obey His command to preach the gospel everywhere – in every nook and cranny of Accra and other places in Ghana and abroad. As we go in faith with the minimum of resources, we will lack nothing. We shall not want.

But notice that He says we need to ask Him. Prayer for more resources to facilitate the evangelistic work ought to be a key prayer topic for the preacher. He should take it as part of his duties, and the Master will supply!

Sheep among Wolves

As we go on our evangelistic journeys, we should know our spiritual character as against the spiritual character of the unsaved world: “I send you forth as lambs among wolves”.

Believers possess the lamb-like humility and innocence of our Master Jesus, the Lamb of God, while the unbelieving world the wolf-like ‘wild’, aggressive, rebellious character of their father, the devil, who is the god of this world (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 4:4; see also 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9).

In the animal world not only do the lamb and the wolf possess opposite natures but also they are no friends. In fact, one is a predator and the other is a victim with the wolf preying on the lamb.

Nevertheless, in our case, we must operate as lambs among the wolf-like peoples of this world and make impact on their souls, converting them from wolves to lambs! What is true in the animal world is not necessarily true in the spiritual world of spiritual struggle between the Lamb of God and the Old Serpent, the wolf-like Satan, the devil. Here, the wolf is a defeated enemy and the Lamb triumphant! Even so, the Lamb still possesses His gentle nature and the wolf his rapacious nature. Accordingly, we must go forth manifesting the gentle character of the Lamb as lambs among wolves preaching the gospel of the Lamb Triumphant. Our power is in the spoken word (*Rhema*) which has power to free those held bondage to the wolf-like will of the devil:

*“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,
“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:24-26).*

The Lamb among wolves has prevailed! By sending us among wolves, He, the Lamb of God, has not left us to the mercies of the wolves. He accompanies us by His Spirit in us, and our security is sure because He’s not just a Lamb but *the only Lamb with the strength of a Lion*, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. He has prevailed and will always prevail:

*“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.
“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:5-6).*

This is the Lamb that lives in us with the strength of the all-conquering Lion of Judah. And He has overcome the world (1 John 4:4). Fear ye not!

The Lord of the Harvest is Faithful and Able to Provide

As we go preaching His truth, the Master says we are not to worry about our basic survival needs and welfare in an unfamiliar (possibly hostile) environment:

*“Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.
“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.
“And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.*

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

“And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you” (vv. 4-8).

It’s an exhortation to put trust in Divine Providence. The work of missions shouldn’t depend on how much money or little we have among other resources.

This is not to say that in these days of modern transportation and media systems (see Dan. 12:3-4), which require payment, we should totally shun money. It’s not about money not needed; it’s about giving priority to faith in God and relying on Him for the provision of all needed resources as we obey His command to preach the gospel. In other words, the Master says, the resources needed for the work should not be our concern. It’s His, and we should look to Him. Faithful as He is (1 Thess. 5:24), He’s not going to disappoint us as He proved with His early disciples when He sent them empty-handed (Luke 22:35).

All our duty is to obey His command to preach the word with single-mindedness: “... salute no man by the way” (v. 46). By this the Master is not asking the preacher to be uncivil or standoffish; rather he’s to be focused and not to be distracted or sidetracked by anything, as he goes on his journey. In essence, the Master’s instruction meant “not to waste time on the road but to hasten to the destination and get on with the work to be done” (*Jewish New Testament Commentary*, p. 121). Christ gets His point across by the skillful use of the rhetorical device of hyperbole: “salute no man on the way!” It carries the force and impression of a single-minded approach to the gospel work.

We need not worry about how we will fare or survive as strangers in an unknown community.

Our Peace is Intact

God will prepare hearts of peace (even among the wolves).

“And into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

“And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again” (vv. 5-6).

We will be adequately compensated by miraculous means! If He can melt mountains (Isa. 64:1-3), then He can certainly melt hearts of stone, ahead of our arrival. The sign of a cooperative amiable spirit is in their friendly responses to our salutation of peace, *Shalom Aleikhem*. Peace will respond favourably to peace! It’s an indication that God has made available space for refreshment and shelter. We are God’s workers, and He will make a way to feed and accommodate us as a form of remuneration.

Otherwise, don’t force yourself on people. That is, “go not from house to house”. This is the particular style of a group of itinerant preachers long identified in scripture as deceivers and purveyors of a false gospel:

*“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Tim. 3:5-8).*

So rather than a one-way style of ‘house to house evangelism’ which applies psychological pressure and is often viewed as intrusive, we are to preach in the public square which relies on the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and the persuasive appeal of the Word. That’s the apostolic model inherited from the Messiah Himself.

In Acts Chapter Two, on the day of Pentecost, the day the Church was baptized in the fire of the Spirit, Peter preached in the square, if not from the vantage point of the ‘Upper Room’, and the impact on the hearers was awesome:

*“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:37-39).*

In chapter three of the same *Book of Acts*, we witness the spontaneous preaching of the word as a direct result of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Jerusalem Temple by Peter and John. The venue was Solomon’s Porch in the temple.

In Acts 8, Evangelist Philip preached in the public square in the city of Samaria. In Acts 10, Peter was sent to Cornelius’ house; Paul and Barnabas preached and worshipped in many synagogues along the route of their evangelistic itinerary (Acts 13:14-17, 44; 14:1). But the pair also did preach in the public square, as in the city of Lystra where a man, born a cripple, received his healing in the name of *Iesous Christos* to the utter amazement of the townsfolk (Acts 14:8-11; cp. 20:20).

So then, ‘house-to-house evangelism’ was not the predominant – though occasional -- style of the early apostles and evangelists. (See Acts 20:20). Instead, they preached in the market-place and in the meeting places of worship and wherever God gave them utterance backed by divine power. That was how the Master instructed them to preach.

Supernatural Divine Proof of the Word

The delivery of the gospel was not to be without heavenly witness! Preachers sent by Messiah are to vindicate the message by supernatural works as proof of the arrival of the Kingdom of God:

“Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (v. 9).

He mentions the miracle of healing first, not necessarily to emphasize priority in time order but to emphasize the divine element in the work of evangelism.

“Heal the sick”, the Master directs. Don’t just preach the word, but let people experience the power of the Word as tangible proof that the Kingdom of God has come to them by the preaching of the gospel! It’s that simple. The impact of the power of the Kingdom of God being preached is experienced in the very lives of the people. The evidence is not in ‘mere’ words – words being used to prove words – but in transformed lives and healed bodies.

By so doing, we demonstrate before the eyes of the people that we represent a Kingdom and a message which transcend our own selves and indeed all human wisdom and power. (See 1 Cor. 2:4-5). We must demonstrate the power of the Kingdom of God as an integral part of the preaching of the gospel. The word of God is not without power.

In such manner did the early church preach.

1 Thess. 1:5

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”

Acts 14:3

“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” (See Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17).

In Romans 15:18-19 the Apostle Paul wrote:

“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

But what if the people reject the gospel of truth?

Pronouncement of Immediate Judgment on Rejecters!

As we preach the message of Christ, we must not shun to declare our heavenly mission and the judgment those who refuse to heed message have brought upon themselves for their rejection:

¹⁰ *“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,*

¹¹ *“Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

¹² *“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.*

¹³ *“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*

¹⁴ *“But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.*

¹⁵ *“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell” (Luke 10:10-15).*

Those communities which reject the messengers of Christ and their message of peace and salvation await a severer judgment than happened to notorious ancient wicked societies like Sodom and Tyre because they, in their time, did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel or witness its accompanying power of mighty deeds.

Yet the rejecters have heard it all and seen it all in this hour of grace! They remain unmoved, they would not give up their wickedness. The ugliness of their evil habits has been exposed and the contents of their sinful hearts laid bare and rebuked. But instead of remorse, they took offence; instead of conviction, they took pride in their sinful lifestyles, instead of brokenness, they rebelled against the sharp-edged, convicting sword of the Word, and swelling with ever ballooning sinful pride turned around to take a hard look at the messengers with anger in their hearts and contempt in their eyes: “Who are these miserable souls to judge us?” (See Gen. 19:9). “Who are they to speak against our hearts’ desires?”

But their rejection and contempt just got noticed in heaven:

“He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me” (v. 16).

It’s that serious. That is the implication of rejecting God’s Word of truth backed by divine power! God’s ministers are His representatives who, apart from preaching the gospel, are equipped with the spiritual gifts of healing and the working of miracles as their credentials from heaven. To reject them is to reject “the ministry of reconciliation” being carried out on God’s behalf (2 Cor. 5:17-21; see also Col. 1:20-23).

The Victory and Joy is Ours!

There are challenges in the evangelistic outreach work, but whether or not some will accept the message, nobody will steal our joy. We worked among wolves and fought demons and returned in victory:

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.

“And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (vv. 17-18).

The proclamation of the word in power has profound ramifications on the kingdom of darkness, believers’ spiritual power and eternal destiny. It brings down the evil power of Satan over people’s lives to bund them in the fetters of sin and oppression – as he falls like lightning! What is more, the preaching of the gospel reinforces believers position of power in Christ over all the power of

the enemy to the point of trampling on them. To wit, “Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (v. 19). Thirdly, the proclamation of the gospel brings a joyful affirmation that our names are written in the Book of Life in heaven. “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (v. 20; see also Php. 4:3).

Heaven itself shares in the joy:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isa. 52:7).

No work is more glorious, more important and absolutely necessary and deserving of our attention than the Great Commission to preach the gospel to every member of the human race. It’s heaven’s business, Jesus’ business to you and me. May He grant us the grace to qualify as His co-workers! Amen!