

Feast of St Luke the Evangelist, Physician of the Soul

18th October 2020

Let us Pray

Almighty God, you inspired your servant, St. Luke the Evangelist and Physician to set forth in the gospel of love and the healing power of your Son. May St. Luke intercede for us that we deepen our understanding of the gospel and grow in compassion of Jesus. Guide us through this meditation so that we become your faithful community till the end. AMEN

Jesus is passing this way.

Can you remember this Sunday school hymn which has been dear to us?

Is there a heart that is waiting – waiting for pardon today,

Hear the glad message proclaiming – Jesus is passing this way

St. Luke 18:35 the blind Beggar near Jericho heard this. He could not see, but he heard only footsteps, and he asked the crowd what is happening? The crowd said Jesus is passing this way. Then he started shouting, “Jesus son of David have mercy on me” He hasn’t seen he hasn’t read, he had only heard about Jesus, but his faith was solid, unshakable. That is why when people started scolding him to stop shouting, he went on pressing. Jesus heard this and felt compassionate and he healed him saying “Receive your sight, your faith has saved you”. The man who was blind from birth came from darkness to light.

St. Luke 17: 11 Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem passing through the region between Samaria and Galilee. Ten Lepers hearing that Jesus was passing by were shouting “Jesus Master have mercy on us.”

They haven’t seen Jesus because lepers are prohibited getting near people. They must shout and say “Lepers Lepers” so that all the others move away. They have only heard about Jesus. But their faith was solid. Jesus just said “go and show yourselves to the priest.” They believed they were healed.

Only one person a Samaritan came to thank Jesus for the healing. St. Luke dramatically, narrative, beautifully wrote these facts showing that he was an intelligent person writing the gospel. His brilliance depicted throughout the Gospel and the book of Acts, the two books he wrote.

When I think of Leprosy, 2020 years ago, we see Covid 19, 2020 years after. In both these diseases you have to keep a distance. Dreadful diseases, while Leprosy takes 4-5 years of contact, covid is instant. Leprosy is by mycobacterium leprae a bacteria, Covid is a virus? a bio weapon. Leprosy makes us disfigured, covid may lead to death.

On the day of Crucifixion the blood of Jesus flowing through, cleansed the lepers. Therefore, when we pray for healing, we should ask the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins.

What is left for us is our faith. St. Luke being a physician very accurately writes about all these diseases.

We should be thankful and grateful when we sing –

“ Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.”

The Magnificat, the Gloria, the Benedictus, they are found only in St. Luke’s Gospel. His compassion for the poor, the women, and the oppressed people should be commended.

St. Luke is the only evangelist to mention about the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost day, the first Christian Church, journeys of St. Paul, were written by this great apostle. He died as a Martyr.

The Gospel which was read today, the mission of the seventy sent by Jesus, (St. Luke 10:1-9,)some writers say that Luke was present, but some writings say he had not seen Jesus but was only with Paul.

So in today’s Gospel St. Luke writes about the mission of the seventy. Jesus appointed seventy people and sent them in pairs (two by two) to every town and village. “ He said the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into this harvest. He says “I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of the wolves”

Then he says do not carry a purse, a bag, nor sandals, and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house say “Peace to this house!”

Cure the sick, cast out demons, and preach the good news.

Verse 16 says. “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you, rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” They are very powerful and strong words of encouragement by Jesus.

Verse 17. What happened? Did the seventy come grumbling? No they returned with Joy!. Then verse 18 Jesus says “I watched Satan fall down from heaven like a flash of lightning.” Which means Satan is defeated.

Verse 20 says. “Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” What a Joy to hear this.

In the book titled **Jesus in Beijing** written by David Alkman shows how Christianity is transforming in China. China in the past is a communist country, where most people were aethists. Then they had traditional religions mostly pagan, like confucism, Taoism, Buddhism etc.

The book tells us that the China Gospel Fellowship also known as **TANGHE** followed this Jesus’s mission of seventy.

In China where many have not heard who Jesus is this fellowship sent two each to 30 provinces to preach the good news. They were poor so only the money for the journey was raised. When they returned after a few months all of them were overjoyed because they were able to form house churches in 22 provinces. Later new churches were established. There were so many persecutions, and burning

the bibles in public by the Chinese Officials. But when Corona infection originated in Wuhan, this mighty Chinese were helpless, due to the rapid spread and with no cure, there they had to call all Christians to pray for the disease to get eradicated.

What does Jesus teach us with the mission of the seventy?

1. Realise what a big job this is and pray for extra help. Harvest is plenty but labourers are few.
2. It is urgent.
3. Do not wait until you have resources and finances. Trust God as the provider.
4. Do the work of a missionary. Don't get discouraged. If they reject you they reject me, but your name will be written in heaven.
5. Have Faith. Trust God. Be ready to defeat Satan.

Develop your faith through prayer and worship Regularly. That should be our refreshing cup of tea.

Without faith it is impossible to please God says Hebrews 11:6

Today we as Sri Lankans are also in the same situation. We are not allowed to go out and preach in public. We cannot give a bible to a non Christian without taking permission from their religious clergy.

But what we ought to do is just like the seventy gather in more and more house groups.

Proclaim the gospel taking every opportunity in one sentence to anyone whom you are helping or giving donations so that they know Jesus through you.

My mother taught me from my small days to say to the person whom you are helping "In the name of living Christ I give you this.... Believe in him and he will bless you abundantly"

To our outreach recipients we can easily do this.

Plant the seed of faith. That is what Jesus is giving us from this message. God will let it grow.

Let us pray

Lord we confess our inaction. We rejoice that your spirit empowers us to continue the mission like the seventy. With steadfast faith and trust in God, help us to spread God's love and good news in every way we can throughout this country, in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

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