

## Daily Devotional, May 27, 2021 Getting the Body Back in Shape

*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. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Luke 10:1-3*

When Jesus sends out the seventy-two disciples in pairs to teach, preach, and heal in his name; I'm taken back by the authority in which the disciples function. The demons are cast out, people are healed, and everywhere these disciples go, even *they* are amazed at the things they are able to do because of the authority Jesus has given them. The disciples are sent out with only the bare minimum for survival, yet they are provided for in whatever town they happen to be traveling through. Jesus was the one who sent them out, but it seems that the Holy Spirit has gone ahead of them, preparing the way.

Reading this passage again, however, the third verse really began to stick out. When we read it in full context, it doesn't seem as though the disciples had any trouble whatsoever, their mission was a huge success, yet in Jesus' own words, they were amazingly, "sent out like lambs among wolves."

To those who are familiar with the work of shepherds, this analogy can be quite disturbing. Lions, wolves, and the like were not the things any shepherd would want to face. They would fight one off if they had to, but I can imagine it was never a desirable part of the job. What is disturbing is that the disciples are not being compared to the shepherd, but to the lambs.

Lambs are mostly defenseless, especially when they are young, and have recently been sheered. Jesus looks at these who have followed him as little lambs, precious, valuable, but potentially unable to defend themselves. Wolves don't travel alone, they work in packs, trying to separate a potential victim from the herd and from the shepherd, it's not a single wolf one needs to watch out for, but the entire pack.

As we have been apart from one another, I'm guessing that it feels as though we have been separated from our herd. Some of us have felt more isolated than others, but we have mostly all missed the joy of being together. However, the longer this time lasts, the more important it is for us to check in on one another, to pray for one another, and find ways to continue to stay connected. I am always hopeful and encouraged that we will be back together very soon, as more and more folks have been fully vaccinated and are slowly coming back to worship services.

Today, the words of Jesus remind us, again, that we have been sent out into the world. We may yet be apart from one another, but we are working to fulfill the mission Jesus has given us; to love and care for one another. Let us continue to call one another, and to make an attempt to get together again, in whatever way we can. As God's community, we are called to be in connection with one another, to be in community. Let us all work toward that end, to work toward being as one as He is one.

Be safe out there, and know your shepherd is watching over you.

***Prayer: Father, thank you that we are not one person but one people. You have made us individuals with unique backgrounds, stories, gifts and passions; but you have given these all to work under the umbrella of the church. Each unique gifting brings joy to us as we use the gift and blessing for those around us. Help us to rejoice in the gifts of others and allow them to bless all of us. Father, we long to see the body grow, and your word gives us a prescription for how this will happen. When each part of the body is working together, we will see growth as we assemble together again. God, we want to see this in our churches, in our cities, in our nation, and in our world. We pray you would use us to build up Your body in love. In the name of Christ, my redeemer, Amen.***