

**YOUR PEACE WILL REST UPON HIM - Biblical Commentary by F. Alberto Maggi OSM**

**Lk 10.1-12.17.20**

*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. 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. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 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. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.*

*The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*

*Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

After the failure of the mission of the twelve that are too taken up with religious nationalist ideology, success, of the supremacy of Israel that should overcome all other peoples, Jesus tries again and changes the envoys. Let's read.

*"After these things, the Lord commissioned seventy-two others..."* Why this number? In the book of Genesis, chapter 10, the gentiles known at the time were actually seventy-two. Therefore these come from paganism. In reality they come from the world of Samaria where Jesus found these recruits.

*"...and sent them on ahead in pairs to every city and place he was about to go."* So after the failure of the twelve Jesus tries with others not linked to this nationalist ideology.

*"He said to them, 'The harvest is bigger than you can imagine,'"* The reply to the good news is an abundant harvest.. *"... but there are few workers. Therefore, plead with the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest"*. Jesus' words are an invitation to become aware that there is need for the cooperation of all. Unfortunately in the religious tradition these words have been limited, reserved, therefore they lose all substance, to the religious vocation.

As if Jesus had thought to invite priests, monks and nuns. Nothing like this. To become labourers in the harvest is an invitation to all. Everyone must collaborate in announcing Jesus' good news. There are no special categories, no reserved categories. Then Jesus gives instructions.

*"...I'm sending you out as lambs among wolves."* So Jesus warns them of the hostility of society, especially the religious society that is seen to threaten the announcement of this good news, of a different relationship with God.

Then Jesus tells to have full faith in people. *"Carry no wallet, no bag, and no sandals. Don't even greet anyone along the way."* The urgency of this work of proclaiming the good news is so important that these rules must be observed. Then Jesus gives an important indication, *"Whenever you enter a house..."*. We need to know that in the culture of that time it was forbidden, as Peter said, *"You all realize that it is forbidden for a Jew to associate or visit with outsiders."* (Acts 10,28) It was unthinkable for a Jew to enter into a Gentile house.

Jesus says: "Do not have such scruples, do not follow these rules." *"Whenever you enter a house, first say, 'May peace be on this house.'"* It is not an invitation, "Peace be in this house", but a gift. It is the disciple the gift of peace, with happiness.

*"If anyone there shares God's peace, then your peace will rest on that person. If not, your blessing will return to you."* So there is no loss if there is a refusal. Then Jesus returns to insist, if there is a problem, and in reality there is also today. *"Remain in this house, eating and drinking whatever they set before you..."* Have no religious scruples, do not be difficult, do not ask for special treatment for religious or ideological reasons.

*"... for workers deserve their pay."* And then Jesus insists: *"Don't move from house to house."* Do not be difficult if there are not those religious observances or not. And Jesus turns again to insist: *"Whenever you enter a city and its people welcome you, eat what they set before you."* Jesus' insistence on not being difficult is strange. It is a very current theme, even today there are people that for ideology, mode or fashion, do not eat certain foods, discard others. And they are in difficulty.

Jesus says: "Nothing like this. Eat what is offered, even if what is being offered does not fit into your ideal menu." *"Heal the sick who are there, and say to them, 'God's kingdom has come upon you.'*" The alternative society has an effect of wellbeing also physical on the people. Then Jesus warns: " Maybe in society they do not welcome you, it does not matter, do not waste time. "

This expression of Jesus *"As a complaint against you, we brush off the dust of your city that has collected on our feet."* was what was done in the gentile land. Israel could not be entered into with something carried from the gentile world, so even sandals were brushed off. If someone does not accept this gift of peace, they are like gentiles, do not waste time, for it seems that there are not the necessary conditions to accept this novelty of the kingdom.

Well, here is the conclusion: *"The seventy-two .."*, they return full of joy very different from the twelve who returned without joy. *".. saying, "Lord, even the demons submit themselves to us in your name."* They succeeded in freeing man of false ideology

. And here is Jesus' expression. *"Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning."* At that time Satan was in heaven and in the divine court, as it says in the Book of Job, and he was a kind of general inspector. He came down to earth, spied on mankind to report to God. Well, with the proclamation of Jesus' good news, that God is love, a God that is kind towards the ungrateful and the wicked, a God who rewards the good and punishes the wicked, as religion presented. But a God that to all, regardless of their behaviour, communicates and offers his love, Satan's role had no more reason to exist.

The author of the Revelation comments: *"...for the accuser of our brother has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."* (Revelation 12, 10) So Satan has lost his role, this is why he fell from heaven. And then Jesus assures that this announcement of life and the announcer of life will be stronger than all the obstacles and difficulties that might be found.

He does according to the figurative language of that time *"Look, I have given you authority to crush snakes and scorpions underfoot."* Those that have poison in them, *"..I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you."* So Jesus assures the community of believers that, when one is a carrier of life, a carrier because this life has been accepted and transmits it to others, there is nothing that can harm them.