

Sometimes God's incursions among us are surprising. Sometimes God's power comes to us when we least expect it from people we least expect. Sometimes we are healed, restored, saved by strangers. This is the peculiar nature of salvation by a stranger named Jesus.

**Luke 10:1-10** 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. 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. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

See also **2 Kings 5:1-14** "The Healing of Naaman."

### Reflections

Jesus appointed seventy-two to go to the local towns to preach the Good News of God's love and to heal the sick. He often selected the outcast and outsiders to serve him and we can be sure that the seventy-two that went out surprised many in the towns they visited. Jesus often sent his followers out in pairs.

Imagine what it was like for the seventy-two and what challenges they faced. Maybe it was something like this...

**Virginia and Susan** were devoted followers of Jesus. Both were divorced mothers and in those days that meant they were outcasts. But Jesus chose them. So they went out. They went to the merchants homes, where the children of the merchants were treated well and thought that they were owed much by the world. Virginia and Susan spoke to these children telling them the Kingdom of God

was at hand. They taught with love and care. Some of the children laughed at them and went to play. Some children looked down on them as outcasts, not worthy of their time. But some children heard the Good News and became followers. Virginia and Susan walked across the room as Jesus commanded, without regard to their circumstance. They talked of God's love and brought children to live in God's love.

**Art and Kevin** were field workers. Just regular guys we would call them. They were sent to the cities where men were prosperous and proud of their wisdom and accomplishments. These men were normally not worthy of the men of the city. But Art and Kevin went to their town and preached the Good News of God's love. Many of the men dismissed them, thinking they were not equal or worthy of their time. Sadly Art and Kevin shook their sandals at these men, but they went on. They found men who would listen and they joyfully told their story

and brought these men to God.

**Jerry and Bev** were married. They spent time in cities where families were very busy doing family things, not focused on God. They talked to families at the soccer fields and markets. They taught that God was first in their lives and that He should be first in everyone's lives. Many families smiled, and kept going, they had a full day of games, music lessons, play groups, things not focused on God. Some families listened though, as Jerry and Bev walked across the ball field to talk to them. Those families became children of God and believers in the salvation that Jesus promised.

We can be like the seventy-two in our lives, every day. Think about how these six of the seventy-two faced their challenges daily and never gave up. How can you become one of the "seventy-two" and do Jesus' will every day?

— Karl Berland

# Readings

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).

## Sunday July 8

**1 Kings 5 1-14** Namaan has expectations of how he is to be cured. How do you set expectations of God, and how do you deal with how God chooses to answer your prayers as He sees fit?

## Monday July 9

**Psalms 86: 11-17** When and as you become an unlikely messenger for God, how do the words of this prayer provide you strength, help you focus on being God's messenger and help sustain you in your efforts?

## Tuesday July 10

**Matthew 3:1-12** John the Baptist is different. Not normal at all, it seems. Yet God chose John to prepare the way of the Lord and to baptize Jesus. What does God's choice for the messenger of Christ's coming into His ministry tell us about messengers for God in our life? How can we be more open to letting God work His will in our life through unlikely messengers?

## Wednesday July 11

**Acts 16:16-34** Paul and Silas face the wrath of the town leaders and are thrown in jail. Rather than fret about their situation they continue to be messengers, converting their jailer and his family to Christ. How can you let your life's trials become an opportunity for you to be Christ's messenger in the world today?

## Thursday July 12

**Luke 4:24-30** Rejection is a hurtful thing to all of us. Jesus is rejected in his hometown. Nazareth, with its not so good reputation, rejects their chance at becoming known to all as Christ's hometown. Jesus shows us in this passage the difficulties a messenger of God faces. When can Jesus experience in being rejected help you face the rejection we all face as messengers of God?

## Friday July 13

**Acts 4:1-22** Peter and John, uneducated common men face the most learned priests. The teaching done by Peter and John was so strong, so filled with truth that the priests were filled with awe and fear. They tried to make them stop, but the Spirit filled Peter and John and they stood up to the priests and rejected their demands. When you face big challenges how can you let the Holy Spirit fill you with the confidence that Peter and John had in front of the Sanhedrin?

## Saturday July 14

**Ephesians 6:10-18** Here Paul describes the armor of God. This armor protects us and strengthens us in our role as messengers. Reading this passage, how can you improve your armor for God so that you can be a strong unlikely messenger?

## Let's Serve & Invite!

Check out this spot for simple ideas you can use at work and at play, on your own and with your family, to encourage others in the name of Jesus.

**Mission Vacation:** Wherever your vacation or day trip takes you and your family, think of yourself as an ambassadors of Christ.. How can you draw people closer to Him?

- Pray for the people around you, for their lives to be changed by the love of Jesus.
- Extend kindness and sincere thanks to the people who serve you — wait staff, housekeepers, life-guards, toll takers...
- Chat with people who are traveling alone. Offer the gift of listening to some of their story.

Got a suggestion?

Email [ServeandInvite@StJohnMD.org](mailto:ServeandInvite@StJohnMD.org)