

**FALL LIKE LIGHTNING FROM HEAVEN**  
**October 19, 2014 –Luke 10: 1-20 –Every Member Canvas**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

This sermon is a word of encouragement to those 68 members of The Church of the Covenant who have agreed to go out this afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and deliver the stewardship packets of the “Learning to Love God” initiative for this fall. Jesus promises –“You will see evil fall like lightning.”

I remember the church I once served who had just put a new steeple atop their sanctuary. It was early in the morning and I was getting ready and a large thunder storm with thunder and lightning hit the town. And all of a sudden there was a gigantic KA-BOOM! That sounded like it was quite close –a giant lightning bolt had evidently hit something quite near and I remember thinking in the moment, “Gee, I bet whatever it hit was smashed to smithereens.” Yep, you guessed it, it hit the brand new steeple. Blew the shutter inserts in the box on which it sat clear across the road; knocked out the alarm system at the bank next store; blew a six foot hole in the roof of the church; fried the entire phone system of the church; and bent at a slight angle the golden cross atop the steeple. People who were critical of the new steeple said, “God doesn’t like the new steeple.” I said, “Sometimes lightning is just lightning and if you put a large metal object on the top of the highest hill in town, without a lightning rod, and a violent thunder storm arrives –A PLUS B EQUALS C. And by the way it wasn’t God that zapped the steeple; it was satan falling like lightning from heaven. Evil doesn’t like it when the people of God step out in faith in new ways...

That is the essence of our scripture for today. Jesus commissions the 70 disciples to go out in His name to do good things for the Kingdom of God. The number 70 is significant because it always represents “the nations”, the non-Jewish people; so Jesus asks the disciples to get outside their comfort zones, outside their comfortable pews in their comfortable synagogues and take the Good News outside. And when they return rejoicing at what God has done through them, Jesus notes our text for today –“*I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven...*” (Luke 10: 18) Jesus sees evil fall when His disciples go out and do something in His name. The reference may seem a bit obscure. It refers to the evil one, Lucifer, being cast out of heaven by God when the evil one and his angels rebel against God. The prince of evil was once an angel of light whose ego and hubris cast him out of heaven. And the evil one fell from his exalted place and into the darkest pit of hell. (This is referred to in Isaiah 14: 12-15) But it also references that day, at the end of days, when God is wrapping up the earth and time itself is coming to a close, when the evil one is finally cast into the unquenchable lake of fire, he and all his angels and all who serve him, and for all eternity. (This is a reference to Revelation 20: 10). –A time when death and disease and evil itself are cast into the pit where they will arise no more. So what Jesus is saying in this passage about evil falling like lightning is that when disciples take seriously what Jesus asks of them, when they go out to spread GOOD NEWS in Jesus’ name, when they get outside their comfort zones to do something for the Lord, when they are sent out by Jesus for GOOD, then evil falls like lightning. It is a foretaste of a world which is to come. It is a precursor and a sign of a coming world without evil, when Jesus’ reigns for ever and ever. When the Kingdom of God comes to earth. When the Lamb who was slain, He alone who is worthy to be praised, comes to reclaim His people and His creation finally and fully for Himself.

When the 68 people (And, gee, I was hoping for 70!) are commissioned and go out this afternoon, evil will totter from its throne just a bit; the Kingdom of God will come just a bit closer; Jesus will reign just a little bit more in our church, and a coming day of love and light where Jesus shall reign becomes just a little more real. **If evil triumphs when good men do nothing. Then evil FALLS when good men and**

**women take a stand, are sent out, and do good in Jesus' name.** May it be said by Jesus of us this afternoon when we return back to report in –“I saw evil fall from heaven like lightning.”

Why is this the case? It requires us to move outside the doors of the church. It is safe inside; it is riskier outside. We are in our comfort zone in here; we are not in our comfort zone out there. We are doing something we may have never done before. We are just sure somehow we are being like the world and “asking for money” instead of bringing Good News to every doorstep we visit. Jesus speaks in these Bible verses of bringing HIS peace with you. If you are received, you are to pass on your peace to that household. Peace and blessing and Good News are coming to a doorstep near to you today. While in a way, I have a reputation as being a good “fund raiser” whatever that means, I really don't like doing it at all. I do what I do not because I like it and not because I am good at it, but purely and simply because I am charged by Jesus to go out and to share with people the Good News of what God is doing at The Church of the Covenant. I love the good I see when people get excited about biblical giving. I love seeing what our mission budget does to impact our community and world. I love the good I see through Christian Education when seeds of faith are planted in children that keep them from the evils of this world. I am not comfortable with stewardship; no, I would much rather go home and watch TV in my comfy chair this afternoon. I am not good at it; I will not manipulate someone to give; I will allow God to speak into open hearts and tell us what to do; I will not use my position as pastor nor my friendship with someone; I don't want to know what someone gives and I am glad I don't know; I would rather not have the money necessary for next year rather than to do something I felt was underhanded or manipulative or purely to put a feather in my own cap. No, actually I am a bad fund raiser; I won't twist someone's arm; I won't do anything more than go out in Jesus' name believing and trusting that when I do the Kingdom of God comes a little closer and evil totters from its throne just a bit more. I am at best a reluctant steward. And I share this with you only because I believe most people are at best reluctant stewards, as well.

There are always things outside our comfort zone related to our faith. Don't like to pray out loud. Don't like to speak to someone about God. Want to keep what I do related to Jesus quiet and low key. Don't want to sing too loudly. Don't necessarily want anyone to know I am a Christian. As we seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ more and more in our life there are always things HE asks us to do that require us to step out in faith. I am willing to step outside my comfort zone in faith because I believe when we do the Kingdom of God comes a little closer and that great day when evil will finally be cast down into the fire and brimstone of the lake of fire draws nigh, as well. When the 68 return this afternoon there will be great rejoicing in heaven.

What would you be willing to do to see evil fall from heaven like lightning? And Amen.

**By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!**