

TFTD 2025.11 Monday March 17th
Seventy others: Luke 10.1-24



And after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and village where he himself intended to go. This story is unique to Luke's Gospel. It's one of the readings for St Luke's Day — because some ancient writers speculated that Luke himself was one of the "70 others". Not very likely, I think — but it's a nice story!

But who were those "70 others"? "Others" of course means "alongside the Twelve apostles". Luke has just told us about Jesus appointing the Twelve and sending them out (9.1-6) — and they've had some amazing experiences together of Jesus' healing power and majesty. They've seen Jesus feed the hungry and heal an epileptic boy. They've seen his glory on the mountain, and listened open-mouthed as he tells them about the path of suffering the Son of Man must follow. And maybe they've begun to think, secretly, that they are Jesus' special friends? (Is it a coincidence that just a few verses before this, we find the Twelve arguing among themselves about who is the greatest (9.46-48)? And then we find John saying, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us" (9.49-50). Does "others"

mean “not one of us”?

Jesus’ call is both something intensely personal (“I have called you by name”) and something that we share with others (“You too?”). When I began to be aware that God was calling me to ordained ministry, it felt like a private thing between me and God — until I met my fellow students and suddenly realized that it was about them too! We’re all called by the same Master, called to play our own individual part in the work of God’s Kingdom — and to work with the “others” who have also been called by the same Master and have their own part to play.

Why seventy? Luke’s Gospel is full of “echoes of Scripture”: little details that tie in the story of Jesus and the first disciples with the bigger story of God’s plan of salvation for his people. In the Bible, 70 symbolizes the number of the nations of the world. So the number 70 symbolizes the world-wide mission that Luke describes in the book of Acts — a story we’re still part of today. That’s why Jesus says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” A world-wide harvest needs a world-wide labour force, reaching out into every forgotten corner. As the old hymn puts it: “You in your small corner, and I in mine.”

And of course that isn’t just about people who are called to be readers or clergy or bishops. Each one of us is called to follow Jesus, to listen for his voice, to discover who we were created to be. It’s His call we follow when we make our life-commitments — whether to work or family or the place we live. Sometimes we simply follow where the need is greatest, doing something because it has to be done. It may be a call to take on a particular role in the church, as a churchwarden or PCC member (or cutting the grass, or sorting out the website) — or to help a neighbour — or to be there for the family. It may simply be a matter of asking for strength to cope with the burdens you’re already bearing, the burdens that life has laid on you. It’s about following the road step by step, even when we can’t see where it’s going, knowing it’s the road that Jesus himself is travelling: “He sent them on ahead of him into every town and place where he himself was about to go”. And that makes all the difference!

**God bless,
Loveday**

And here's an Irish blessing for St Patrick's day!

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind always be at your back,
May the sunshine warm upon your face,
May the rains fall soft upon your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

