



## A CALL TO HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF GOD'S GOODNESS TO US!

The last time the Fourth of July fell on a Sunday, an American traveler was visiting England, staying in Canterbury, the home of a great medieval cathedral and the cradle of English Christianity. It did not take long for the traveler to note one very important difference between the Fourth of July in England and in the United States. Things were a lot quieter in England, without fireworks or parades or bands and speeches. Then late in the afternoon, after an English summer shower, God celebrated the day as a beautiful rainbow quietly and eloquently filled the sky over the English countryside.

No matter whether it is the founding of a new nation or finishing the crossword puzzle in the morning newspaper, human beings love to celebrate their accomplishments. And accomplishments need to be celebrated, but in our celebration, we should not forget the real source of the good things that we do. Jesus said as much in the Gospel today; Isaiah the prophet reminded us of God's goodness as well, and Paul the apostle insisted upon honoring God's part in all that he did.

**Paul wrote to the Galatians, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."** What we heard today are the last words of Paul's letter to the Galatians. He summed up his response when he heard that they were "going it on their own." After Paul had preached to the gentle Galatians, others had come saying that they must keep all of the Jewish commandments if they were to follow Jesus. In other words, they thought they were going to earn their salvation by living a good life. In no uncertain terms, Paul let the Galatians know, and warned us as Christians, that our salvation is God's gift by which we are made a "new creation." We should rejoice in what God has done in us, rather than in what we do ourselves.

**Isaiah rejoiced at God's restoration of the city of Jerusalem. Armies had laid siege to the city, but now foreigners would bring gifts instead of destruction.** Two verses before our passage begins today, Isaiah asked, "Can a country be brought forth in one day, or a nation be born in a single moment?" We might ask the same question as we commemorate our American independence. Have we truly become the nation God has called us to be? Are we the best country that we can be? Isaiah saw that the change in Jerusalem came when the people gave up alliances with worldly powers dependent upon worldly weapons and sought to do the right thing, following after God.

**Jesus sent his disciples as "lambs among wolves." They were to carry no money bag and say, "Peace to this household."** When we go as "lambs among wolves," coming without the material power of wealth in our money bags and the surprises of hidden agendas in our sacks, then the reign of God accompanies us. The disciples discovered that proclaiming the reign of God meant accepting others. The "other" might eat strange foods, speak a strange language, or even call God by a different name, but still God loved them and the reign of God was over them, too. We have been so blessed by God that we can begin to think that we are "too big to fail," but Jesus warned his disciples not to rejoice in their abilities, their power or their wealth.

Jesus longs for us to rejoice, not simply in what we have done in the past, but in the fact that "our names are written in heaven." In other words, we have been made part of God's family and God's family is much bigger than anything we shall ever see here on earth. As members of God's family we have responsibilities that reach to all God's children beyond any earthly border that we can ever imagine.



*Jesus sends His disciples out in pairs to bring His peace and proclaim the Kingdom of God....Luke 10:1-12, 17-20*