

**‘The Kingdom of God is at hand for you,’
are Jesus’ final words in today’s Gospel from Luke.**

It kind of summarizes everything we live for.

**In everything we say, in everything we do,
in everything we hope for, everything is pointed
towards the Kingdom of God.**

But it’s not that simple.

**Jesus sends seventy-two disciples
ahead of Him to prepare His way.**

**He gives them specific instructions
on how to act and what to say.**

**And the instructions He gives
seem a little strange, kind of backwards.**

Jesus sends them as lambs among wolves.

That doesn’t seem safe or wise.

Carry no many bag, no sack, no sandals.

That doesn’t seem practical or prudent.

Greet no one along the way.

That seems rude.

Jesus does seem to go against the grain,
especially in the Jewish culture of His time.

And His instructions to us seem similarly backwards.

We are to love those who hate us.

That not only doesn't make sense,
but it's also hard to do.

It's much easier to hate those who hate us.

Luke is credited with writing
the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

His theme seems to emphasize
the upside-down-ness of God's Kingdom.

Everything seems backwards
to what we see all around us;
the anger, the selfishness, the discourtesy,
the vulgarity, the culture of death.

And that's the point.

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over
and expecting different results.

Jesus came to turn us all on our heads.
And save us in the process.

The Word of Jesus,
given to us by Luke,
flips the world's values on its head.

Jesus was rejected,
and in being rejected,
by giving Himself over for us,
by dying on the cross,
saves us.

Jesus gives us an example to follow,
to turn our lives upside down
and love without counting the cost,
to give until it hurts and then give some more,
to die to ourselves in order to gain eternal life.

If we truly embrace the life Jesus teaches us to live,
as Luke shares in his two books,
we can then see the love God has for us,
the love God has for our brothers and sisters
and the love He wants us to share with each other.

It seems so inside-out
until we see just what God has already done for us,
given us His only begotten Son,
so that we might have life
and have it abundantly.