

Luke 10:1-20
"Sent Out to Harvest"
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

July 7, 2019
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Intro]

One of the most enduring questions asked by human beings concerns the purpose of our existence: "Why are we here?" What are we supposed to do in life?

As Christians, we know that we are here because God loves us and wants us to be His own.

Our chief purpose is to be loved by the Triune God and, in response, to believe in Him and love Him. Yet, this is not the complete purpose of human existence. We are also here to love and serve other people.

Jesus continually reminds us in His Word that we are to serve other people in love. As Christians, we serve other people through our vocation.

So, do we serve people through our employment? What if we're not employed? Well, that is not exactly how God uses the word "vocation."

You see, although many people think of "vocation" only as a synonym for a job, this word actually has a much broader concept. According to God, the word vocation means "a calling." As followers of Christ, we are called to do certain things, and not just your job.

God calls us to various tasks, relationships, and responsibilities. Some vocations come at different stages of life. For a time, a person may have the vocation of student, but later an employee, or even perhaps later the employer.

At the very least, our vocation is son, daughter or brother, sister or father, mother. We serve each other and we forgive each other. We do this because Christ served and forgave us. So, this is our vocation.

God calls each and every one of us to love Him and to serve our neighbor. God works through all the various vocations we each have. Each vocation is an opportunity to serve.

[Sending Out the 72]

In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus calls an additional 72 men to be sent out ahead of Him, two by two, into every town and place where He was about to go. He called them out to tell the people that the kingdom of God has come near. He sent them out to harvest.

Jesus said to them: ***"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"*** (Luke 10:2a).

So what is this plentiful harvest? This harvest is all people who have not heard about Jesus. You see, Jesus came to save all people and not just a select few. The Apostle Paul through inspiration asks these questions in Romans 10: ***"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?"*** (Romans 10:14-15).

Here, Jesus is doing just that. He is sending out these 72 men to teach that the kingdom of God has come near. He is sending out these 72 men in addition to His 12 apostles.

Now, we don't know very much about these 72 men, but what we do know is vitally important: They have been called and sent by Jesus, and they are given the task of sharing a message in His stead and by His command. And that message given can be summarized: ***"The kingdom of God has come near you"*** (Luke 10:9) and ***"Peace be to this house"*** (Luke 10:5).

This is their objective. This is their task. They are to proclaim that the kingdom of God is near because the King is near. Jesus is on His way.

These 72 men were trained by Jesus to tell of the kingdom of God. Jesus also prepared them to be urgent in their telling. These 72 were to have a single-mindedness of discipline on their mission to tell everyone "the kingdom of God has come near you" and "peace be to this house."

The long-awaited Messiah is on His way. He is coming to bring peace. This peace is not an emotional sort of calm, but is peace that this world cannot give. This peace is the removal of hostility and hatred between God and man.

You see, by nature, we were all born as enemies of God. We want it our way. We want to look out for our own self-interests, before we ever think about others. We were born lost and dead in our trespasses –our sin – that we could not do anything to save ourselves.

This is what the 72 are sent out to do. They are sent out to proclaim that true peace is coming. True peace is coming in Jesus!

[The Power of Jesus' Words]

As Jesus sent out the 72, He also told them this: ***“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me”*** (Luke 10:16).

These words from Jesus likely gave these 72 comfort. So, whatever reaction they received from the people, their reaction was to Jesus and not to them, good or bad.

Now, hearing such good news of peace, no doubt many of those who heard this message then shared it with others. We could say, they were gossiping the Good News.

When you hear good news, do you keep it to yourself? No, we want to tell as many people as we can!

The kingdom is near because the King is near, and the King is near to bring peace with God and man.

For those who embraced this message, they were embracing the Prince of Peace Himself. But for those who rejected this message, they were rejecting Jesus and the Father who sent Him.

These men certainly faced much rejection along the way, but remember they returned to Jesus with much joy saying, ***“Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”*** (Luke 10:17).

The Word of Jesus had been effective that many who heard these men were healed and delivered.

[Jesus is Present and Promises to Return]

Today, the Triune God is indeed still present through His Word. We give thanks that Jesus brings us peace that is so desperately needed.

We all struggle with the sickness of a troubled conscience because of past sins. We experience restlessness and anxiety. We may worry about the troubled world we live in. But, it is Jesus who comes to rescue us from sins and worry. He brings us the peace that this world cannot give.

At the time of the sending of the 72, Jesus was ushering in the hope of peace. He accomplished that peace between God and man when He was nailed to the cross, suffered and died for you and me. He accomplished that peace between God and man when He rose from the dead three days later.

Through Christ's death and resurrection, He has carried our sin to the cross and there He has paid our debt. There is no longer any division between God and man for all who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. That division is gone, all that remains is peace.

We were brought into this peace through the waters of Holy Baptism. There, we became a child and heir of His kingdom.

Christ continually comes to us to remind us of this peace we have been given. He does this through the office of the Holy Ministry and other church-work vocations. Christ speaks to us each Lord's Day through pastors as He proclaims the Good News of forgiveness of sins, life everlasting and salvation.

We each receive this grace through the Means of Grace in hearing His Word and receiving His Sacrament.

We also know that Christ will come again. So, in the meantime, we ought to proclaim Christ's coming in our various vocations as we love and serve our neighbor. We also pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest to tell of God's peace with man through His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠