

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, July 6, 2025

"We are All Missionaries" based on Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

Today we meet a God in Jesus Christ who sends people out into the world as missionaries. Just think, Jesus partners with us flawed humans to spread the good news of the Kingdom of God to others. That makes us all missionaries. That seems overwhelming, doesn't it? But it's true. In our baptism and great commission in Matthew 28, we were called to go out and make disciples of all nations. Sometimes the message of Christ is accepted right away, other times it is rejected. But it's like planting a garden, don't give up if you don't see the fruit grow right away. Just keep being you. Speak of the grace you receive in Jesus. Describe the hope you have regardless of what is happening in the world... as hard as that seems. It takes time, nurturing, and patience for seeds of faith to grow. Our job is to keep scattering seeds by how we live, how we show up for others, and what we say. Our words and actions matter. People are watching us. And of course we fall short, but part of witnessing is learning to live as a forgiven sinner.

When I say the Kingdom of God, it, can be confusing. It is the hoped for way that the world should work according to Jesus... where there is peace, justice, and wholeness for all. Jesus brought this kingdom to earth in his incarnation. Through his teachings and kingdom parables it illustrated his dream for the world. And we are called as Christians to practice what Jesus preaches... to practice kingdom values. We pray in the Lord's prayer, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Luther said, God's kingdom is breaking in without us, but we pray that it becomes a reality among us. That is where the church comes in.

In our Gospel for today from Luke 10, it is called the Mission of the Seventy... or some manuscripts say 72. Either way, the number is significant, because in Genesis 10, it represented the number of known nations in the world according to the genealogy of Noah and his sons. This shows the universal mission of Jesus to try to reach every nation and every peoples.

Jesus knows he can't do it alone, especially when he will leave his disciples behind for the cross and resurrection, and then will ascend to the right hand of the Father where he is now. His mission will continue through us, the church, with the power of the Holy Spirit promised to us in baptism... using our unique gifts and talents.

First, Jesus sends the 70 missionaries out 2X2. Why in twos? When you are in pairs, you have support, a witness, or someone to pick you up when you fall. You have a companion (which means someone to share bread with) and a helper. I have always enjoyed visiting in pairs, especially with my wife, Jeranna.

I wonder how Jesus paired them up. Count off by numbers? Proximity to each other? Then Jesus queues them up giving them final instructions. I imagine him as the director of running race with a bullhorn in his hand as everyone is gathered at the starting line... adrenaline pumping.

Ok, I am sending you out everywhere I intend to go. All right... sounds good.

The harvest is plentiful, but laborers are few. Ok, got it Jesus, we are needed. And harvest often referred to the end times, so there is a sense of urgency here.

Now, Go on your way... but first...

Know that I am sending you out like lambs in the midst of wolves.

Whoa, what's Jesus talking about? You mean there will be danger and risk involved? Lambs are weak, vulnerable creatures. They can't defend themselves. They are completely dependent on their mother or shepherd.

Maybe that's the point. Becoming fully dependent on our good shepherd.

Jesus continues:

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals. What, no money, no extra clothes, or shoes on our feet? Rely on the hospitality of others. Travel light. What is weighing you down. What burdens do you need to lay down at the foot of the cross?

True story, in 1951, a woman named Mildred Norman, a peace activist, who came to be known as Peace Pilgrim, walked across North America for 28 years carrying no money, food, or supplies, but only the trust of God and neighbor to sustain her. Here Jesus wants his disciples to fully rely on God... the old FROG acrostic. Rely on the hospitality of others as a way of putting your trust in God.

Whatever house you enter, say, "Peace to this house!" Eat and drink what they drink. Don't look for a better deal next door. Don't complain about the food. Accept the hospitality they offer. And when you do this, you will catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of God.

Whenever you enter a town and you are welcomed, eat what is set before you, cure the sick, and tell them the Kingdom of God has come near. Even if you are rejected, shake the dust off your feet, but still say, "Know this the Kingdom of God has come near." Then move on.

In other words, there is still time for them to come to know me and my love for them. Leave the judgement thing up to me. It's not your job to judge others. Just do your job of sharing the kingdom with others.

So, the 72 went out and were successful. Demons submitted to them and demons were cast out. The sick were healed. They returned in joy because of their success. Jesus said, don't rejoice in that, rejoice that your names are written in heaven. In other words, as believers in me, you have a future that is bright in life or death.

Unfortunately, we still have wars, hate, shootings, hungry people, natural disasters like the floods in Texas, and disease. We live in a fallen world. But we believe the kingdom of God is still breaking in and becomes visible when we offer and receive hospitality, when we

stand against hate and injustice, when we feed people, and visit the sick, and care for the most vulnerable among us. Now Go out! Amen