

July 3, 2016
Luke 10:1-20

Proper 9C
Spread the Reign of God the Lord

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have you ever been assigned a large task not knowing how it was going to get done with only a few of you? Perhaps it was a group project in school with your partners not being as motivated as you. Our text for this morning talks about a large task...but get this they are told there are only a few workers. This huge task is a harvest...in a month or so, harvest will commence and it's a large task and even though you have it down to a science and you do it every year, perhaps you too think, how will I ever get this done, with only a combine or two and a grain car or two, along with the truck.

The harvest in our text is much more important than any late summer grain harvest or October beet harvest. This harvest is the harvest of the kingdom. This harvest is also going to be difficult and needs to be done with great urgency, but yet even with this, the Lord God gives His workers the tools they need. Who are His Workers? It's not just pastors and other church workers...but it's you...the Priesthood of all believers!

In our text there are few workers to go into the harvest field, so Jesus tells the 72 pray earnestly for workers...and I'm sure they did, and then he tells them go...go now. Jesus tells them: ⁴*Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.*¹ This is urgent, much like when the Israelites were told to flee Egypt...it was urgent. It's still urgent for you as you Spread the Reign of God the Lord. More on the urgency in a moment.

First we hear what Jesus says before he tells them to go with no moneybag, no knapsack, etc. HE says, ³*Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.*² Sending you out as lambs amidst wolves. That's dangerous...wolves like to eat lambs. Is he also sending you amidst wolves? The answer is simply and honestly...yes! You will find yourself as the minority in the world. In that day and age, those who believed in Christ were a minority, those who recognized Jesus as the Son of God were in the minority. So it is today! You are also in the minority...even the population demographics may tell a different story. Not everyone is going to be happy to see you as a member of the Kingdom...as a worker in the harvest.

Not everyone is going to be happy seeing you spread the reign of God the Lord. Not everyone is going to be happy with the spread of Christianity, so the wolves, sent by Satan, they are going to attack you, attack the church, attack those working to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, this past Monday, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down a law in Texas that helped protect the unborn from savage murder. The California House of

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:4). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:3). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Representatives are debating a bill that has already passed their Senate that will endanger faith based colleges and universities from teaching their beliefs both in the classroom and in the greater spectrum of campus life. Satan is using the things that influence and impact the most people...dare I say...government, media, and our school system. Satan is using them to erase the Bible from our culture. In a book recently released by Concordia Publishing House entitled *The Messengers*, they are living in a society where it is illegal to be a Christian. They are living in a society where the church went underground. They are living in a society where the bible was removed from everything, and they are putting together the word underground. It's a book that I think is pointing to a time in the future.

It's not much different than in the times that Jesus was speaking and sending out 72. Even then, they wanted to silence Jesus and His Word, the government...and even the church of the day was taking part in it...and today...society is still doing it. Nothing new is under the sun. In America, we've had the ability to be comfortable with our faith, we've enjoyed our freedoms, but now...as these freedoms are under attack, as they are trying to silence the Bible in every aspect of life, the time is still urgent to go out into the community and spread the Gospel.

Jesus sent 72 into towns and villages that he would soon head to. He sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God. He sent them with urgency...⁴ *Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.*³ What Jesus says to us is the same. Ask the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into the harvest fields. The fields are white for the harvest. Perhaps these harvest fields are across the globe as we pray for the Christ to send Missionaries such as one my best friends Pastor Gauthier as he's about to be deployed to Panama to teach in their seminary and help plant churches. It's not just Panama, Mexico, or Africa. My dear fellow redeemed we are to pray for workers to be sent into our towns and villages as well, for the harvest is there as well. And as you pray, he sends you with urgency to a people who are sitting in darkness and are dragging others into the darkness. But you and I we sit in the light...so the responsibility is ours! I can constantly tell you that the World is growing darker by the day, and plead with you to help in the advancement of the gospel in our communities of Fisher and Euclid and the surrounding countryside.

We heard last week that the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints is Built to Last. As the days grow darker, the light will never be extinguished, it may grow dim in eyes of the world. Yet, it shines like the sun. And He sends us out with the light. We read in Acts 13:47 *For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."*⁴ The disciples, which also included Paul and Barnabas later on started in Jerusalem and went out from there to the ends of the earth.

What does Jesus also tell the 72 in our text, they are being sent out as lambs amidst wolves. And so are we...it's been commented already that we are going to be seen as weak, perhaps as

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:4). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ac 13:47). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

intolerant. We might even be seen as unprepared for our task at hand. Yet the Lord sends us out...not just pastors and teachers...but you the Priesthood. We will be persecuted, we will be tempted to sit back and let others do it, but yet we are called to Spread the Reign of God the Lord and no matter how unprepared you might think you are...you've been given all you need...the Word of God that provides the Words for eternal life.

Did Jesus send the 72 out unprepared...it may have appeared that way...but He sent them out with The Word of God. He sent them out to bring the Kingdom of God to people. He sent them out to proclaim peace.

When they were welcomed, peace was brought to that place. This is what Jesus says:

⁵ *Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!'* ⁶ *And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.* ⁷ *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.* ⁸ *Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.* ⁹ *Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'* ⁵ When the people welcomed the messengers their sins were forgiven. They are healed, the kingdom of God has come near to you.

But yet, there were times when the 72 weren't welcomed. Jesus tells them: ¹⁰ *But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say,* ¹¹ *'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'* ¹² *I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.* ⁶ When the messengers entered these towns the kingdom of God only came near to them...it didn't come to them individually. It's only near because they rejected the Kingdom. They rejected the one who sent the messengers. They rejected the one who sent Jesus into the world.

So when you bring God's kingdom to various people and they reject you...know that they are rejecting Christ first and foremost.

Really though what happened, did these 72 comeback weeping and crying. Did they come back sad? No, we hear in our text: ¹⁷ *The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"* ⁷ They came back with Joy. God's Word was doing what it does. Jesus responds to them saying: *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.* ¹⁹ *Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.* ²⁰ *Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits*

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:5–9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:10–12). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:17). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

*are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*⁸ Their true joy is not that the evil spirit's are subject to Christ's name...but their true joy...your true is that your names are written in heaven. It's a saying, "Rejoice that you have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light." That's the thing to first rejoice about...you are saved. Secondly, you can rejoice in the power of the Word of God, that HE has given you to speak.

My dear fellow redeemed, your names are written in heaven. You have been saved through the bloody cross and the joyful resurrection. You were claimed in baptism. You were marked with the cross. You receive the Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. You have your sins forgiven in the Holy Absolution. Your names are written in heaven. Rejoice in that fact.

Rejoice also in the Word of God. You have been given that Word of God. You have been given the responsibility as one of God's dearly baptized to take this urgent message to those sitting in darkness...to those walking around without hope. The time is now to act, to go out into the harvest fields and spread the message that the Kingdom of God is near...and hopefully it can become near to those you speak to. It's not just your pastors that have been called to the task of speaking the Gospel...but you have been as well. Let's go out as the Priesthood of all Believers as we are sent to the places God has placed us in...and right now that is the communities of Fisher, Euclid, Lowell Township, and other places that surround our communities. Let's go out and Spread the Reign of God the Lord and continue to rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Remember, you've been assigned a task...to pray for workers to be sent into the Harvest Field and the answer to that prayer is given at your baptisms. For the answer isn't just pastors and church workers...it's the priesthood of all believers. The insurmountable task is you being sent into the Harvest Field, with little to use, but yet God will provide you the Words to speak. He provides you with His Word...the very Word of the Lamb of God who was sent amidst wolves and slaughtered for you. This Lamb didn't stay slaughtered, He rose as the Victorious Lamb to grant you life and to make sure your names are written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life. This is a task that seems insurmountable, but with Jesus on our side, we can accomplish this task. It's a great time to be the church...so let's go out as pastor and people, the Priesthood of All Believers and Spread the Reign of God the Lord.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 10:18–20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.