

Sermon Draft

Text: Luke 10:1–12

Sermon: “Time to Get to Work”

October 18th is the day we remember St. Luke the Evangelist and because this feast falls on Sunday we remember this servant of God the author of two books, Acts and Luke, as well as a physician who cared for the physical needs of others. More important, he cared for spiritual needs. He wanted to teach us the Christian faith Jesus’ life and the life-changing importance of Jesus’ death and resurrection so that we grow in our God-given faiths by participating in the Word and Sacrament ministry of the Church.

Thus, Luke not only gives us an accurate account of sending more workers into the world, into the mission field, but also, in doing so, how there is a sense of urgency about the Kingdom of God.

In today’s text from Luke’s Gospel Jesus, as he had done with the Twelve, sends seventy-two workers **“into every town and place where he himself was about to go”** (v 1).

So that the Gospel may be shared with more people and its reach be broadened to others in the world. Jesus broadens the scope of the outreach here, building on what He had just done in reaching out to Samaritans.

Then comes the verse we hear perhaps every time we have a mission festival. Jesus said, ***“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”*** (v 2). Here again, the sense of urgency comes forth, doesn’t it? We needn’t look very far here at Peace we need workers to carry on God’s Kingdom work right here. As the nominating committee tries to fill the vacant positions on the church council they truly understand this passage. As we try to recruit volunteers to help with the different ministries and programs like the community meal this passage rings true. It’s nothing new but it is still very true, ***“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”***

“Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” To “pray earnestly” or “beseech” is to ask the Lord urgently and fervently to send laborers into his harvest because, after all, the ones who were sent were sent out as ***“lamb in the midst of wolves”*** (v 3). We can certainly relate to that, can’t we? When we witness, there are times when we, too, are met with swift opposition and even persecution for some people want to remain in darkness, rejecting the Gospel.

This urgency continued, even in the midst of danger, as Luke penned our Lord’s instructions for the Seventy-Two: ***“Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road”*** (v 4). You see, the kingdom of God was near; in fact, it had already arrived in the preaching of the Seventy-Two, and soon Jesus himself would be in their midst in their very towns and villages. So, they are told to ***“greet no one on the road”*** because chitchatting on the way, as polite as it may be, could involve, say, long updates on the wife and kids.

There was no time for that, especially when salvation was at hand, being so, so close. We can sense the urgency to share the Gospel.

That is why our Lord also gave instructions on what to say once they entered a house: ***“Peace be to this house!”*** (v 5). Again, time was of the essence! Those words were not just some protocol Jesus drummed up but were given as a real blessing. Those who received it in good faith actually benefited from it. Otherwise, it would return.

Jesus also sets the precedent for mission work to various houses as those elements of table fellowship would continue in the worship of the post-Pentecost church: preaching, eating, and drinking in the presence of Christ. Those who received and provided hospitality welcomed into their homes the preaching and feasting of the kingdom, that is, the Gospel. In this way also, the messengers’ physical needs were met for worthy is the worker of his wage.

So, what about us? What does this have to do with Christians in the twenty-first century? As God the Holy Spirit brings us into this text through our brother Luke seeing Jesus send these disciples into every town where he was about to go, with precise instructions for their mission how do we view the mission of the Church, namely, the kingdom of God? With indifference, or with the same type of urgency?

First and foremost, Christian family, do we honestly pray with urgency and a fervent heart when asking our Lord to send workers into his harvest? Whether it be here or elsewhere. Do we really see the importance and blessing of having trained pastors and church workers in our pulpits, in our classrooms, and beside the beds of the sick and dying? Are we concerned for our sister congregations who are vacant? Are we concerned when we read our synodical reports that continue to tell us we have a great need for pastors, but only so many candidates to fill those vacancies?

Is there an urgency to train and send out faithful pastors and church workers or to volunteer since the workers seem to be fewer and fewer and the harvest is more and more abundant?

Then again, for many congregations the question needs to be asked do we appreciate our under-shepherds, our pastors, our Deacons and Deaconesses and other church workers by supporting them with kind words, thoughts, and prayers, along with decent wages and benefits, because, after all, they've provided us with Christ, with Word and Sacrament ministry?

Is it not important to have our children baptized and confirmed, to have weddings and funerals centered on Christ and blessed by a pastor? Is it imperative to have weekly Christ-centered messages, properly distinguishing Law and Gospel, with relevant application? What is at stake here? Life or death!

After a wedding a pastor had a member thanked him for the message and for being his pastor. Why?

He recalled a wedding he had attended earlier that year, and how the couple had booked a pastor online. If that isn't a problem in itself, she not only charged the family \$800 dollars for her services, but called the bride by the wrong name and was intoxicated during the ceremony. He couldn't believe what he was seeing and thought to himself: "How sad this is how they'll remember their 'Christian' wedding day"

So, family, Christ is of utmost importance, isn't he? That's why he continued to reach out with compassion through the Gospel ministry he established the preaching, teaching, and reaching out to others with the message of him crucified and risen, that he died willingly on that cursed tree and left his tomb empty so that all people, yes, all people, including you and me, would be with him forever.

Therefore, thanks be to God that he chose Luke and gave him the thoughts and words to show us that in Jesus God's salvation has come!

Yes, thanks be to God that Luke also gives us this account of Jesus sending the Seventy-Two, and how time is of the essence when it comes to the kingdom of God since with and because of Jesus, there's everlasting life.

And finally, thanks be to God that he continues to send out trained pastors and church workers who faithfully provide Word and Sacrament ministry and instruction, so that our God-given faiths may be strengthened and nurtured as we continue with urgency to witness and reflect the light of this world a light that truly saves now and forevermore. Oh, yes and volunteer!

Amen