

Luke 10:1-20
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
July 6, 2025

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

When we began this non-festival half of the church year, we mentioned how – though the Gospel is always about Jesus – we might rightly see the Sunday reading apply to us, as *this* half of the year seems to focus a bit on the *doctrine* of Christ in the daily life of the Christian. Last week, that was certainly true as we considered how Jesus called would-be disciples to ‘follow him’ in the theology of the cross, to set *their* face to the cross and *his* accomplishing of it, and thus to live their lives desiring to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

This morning’s text includes verses immediately following last week’s text. So, we might be tempted to conclude that the would-be followers of last week *become* the seventy-two sent out in this morning’s text, as if we followers now become the laborers and evangelize the world. But, we must resist drawing such a comparison, because the text says he sent out 72 *others*... *not* those of last week’s text. Whether these *others* were already disciples, or others he had called is not made clear; what *is* clear is that you have

to disassociate last week's text from this week's, especially as this week's begins with the phrase, Μετα δε ταυτα – "Now *after* these things." You might say, "*separate* from these things."

So, this has a different application to your life than last week. If last week was about Jesus preparing men to be disciples, this week seems to be about Jesus preparing certain men to be sent ones – literally, apostles – men for the Office of the Holy Ministry. Indeed, the text includes two specific clues that demonstrate this. First, that He refers to them repeatedly as laborers:

- "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest."
- Again, "Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages."

The second clue is that Jesus repeatedly references *sending* them:

- "I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves."
- Again, "The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me..."
- Again, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy."

In short, it becomes clear pretty quickly that this is about Jesus preparing certain chosen disciples for the apostolic ministry, much like an internship (vicarage). Indeed, doesn't the Collect for the Day focus on the sending of messengers "to preserve Your people in true

peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger.” At which point, you may say, “Well then, it sounds like this text should be meditated upon at a seminary, but what does it have to do with us in the pews?”

It’s the very *purpose* of the sending of messengers that has to do with you! – “to preserve Your people in true peace!” Especially let ‘sink into your ears’ the last line of the Collect: “that by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger.”

Now, we can all quickly nod our heads in agreement, agree that the Church should be kept safe, and go home. But, we’d be missing the depth of, and many marvelous points Jesus makes in, our text.

First, consider what it means that Jesus sent them to houses: “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’” We *could* explain that by saying that houses were the first places of Christian worship and this is a picture of Jesus sending them to little churches. There *could* be credence in that, as he says, “Do not go from house to house” (a pastor is called to a particular congregation) and again, “Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages.” (Yes, in *one* congregation, the pastor as laborer is cared for.)

However, we should also consider *this*: for Jesus to send his messengers into people’s houses is to send them into their daily

lives. We even have a formal liturgical rite by which the pastor first steps into your personal home saying, “Peace be to this house!” So, for Jesus to send his messengers into people’s houses is not just about Sunday morning. To send them into their cities and towns, and – if the people don’t receive them – to send them into their *streets* to shake the dust off their shoes as God’s judgment against the hearers – those aren’t images of the preaching being isolated to people’s spiritual lives on Sunday morning! Those are images – city, town, street, house – that demonstrate that Jesus means His Word to be proclaimed *into* and *for* your daily life.

While that doesn’t mean it’s the pastor’s job to creepily *spy on you*, it does mean it’s the pastor’s job not to simply speak in platitudes, to make vague proclamation that everyone can agree to on Sunday, then deem irrelevant to, and ignore in, daily life! No, Christ sent messengers to all corners of the earth, all nations, to come find you... sent them *into* your life, that the proclamation of the Word of God would lead you to repent of your sins and walk in His ways and rejoice in His forgiveness: “Woe to you, Chorazin!... If [what has been done] in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have *repented* long ago.” And doesn’t Jesus himself say after his resurrection that repentance for the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations? And isn’t that preaching of repentance for forgiveness directly tied to Jesus’ cross? – that, to preach Christ crucified is to preach not *only* his atoning death, but to

also preach and point out the sins for which He had to die his atoning death. Don't we hear this in Peter's Pentecost sermon, which highlights the people's rejection of the Christ – "this Jesus you crucified, God has raised up!" – that the people may repent of their sins... that *you* may repent of your sins, not which *forced* Jesus to the cross, but for which He *willingly* went to the cross because those sins *needed* atoning. *Your* sins needed atoning. *You* need forgiveness. That's not a Christian platitude; it's part of your daily life! That needs to be preached, just as much as does the good news that, indeed, that atoning sacrifice has been made, and your sins are regularly being forgiven! And you have life in Christ's name!

And we are all very willing to hear this theology of the cross on a Sunday morning. But are we willing to hear *this morning's text*, which clearly says such work of the messengers of Christ enters *daily* life – Your homes, streets, towns, and cities! How neatly we have convinced ourselves to divvy out life into 'spiritual' and 'worldly' matters... to be able to say, "Okay, Lord, you can preach on matters related to 'sin,' but not about daily-life matters in which sin is found – the bedroom, my daily-life choices, idolization of daily bread, even matters on local or national news – those, Lord, all are off limits; but you, Lord, can preach to me about sin and grace." Where is sin *found*? Where is grace *needed*? – but in daily life! To sustain you unto eternal life.

But, here is where we build up a wall of defense. For, as soon as the preaching of the messenger hits too close to home, we become offended. “Stay in your lane, Lord. Stay in your lane, Pastor. *You get Sunday; don’t you dare come into Monday through Saturday.*” Is *that* what our text says? Is the Creator’s redemption and sanctification of His creation in the life of the Church so neatly sequestered into one day a week, leaving the other six untouched and unaccountable to (and, therefore, un-helped by) God?

When we are in the pews, among other members, listening to ‘general preaching,’ we feel defended from such a holy invasion of my personal space. But, where it really becomes offensive is in pastoral care, doesn’t it? In our society, pastoral care is seen not as shepherd and sheep, but as low-budget counselling, so that the Christian comes of his own volition and, thus, often with his own expectation of what he *wants* to hear. And if he doesn’t get the proclamation he *wants*, then suddenly the Word of God “might be irrelevant to my life!”... or perhaps it’s that useless messenger, who obviously doesn’t know how to wield God’s Word the way you’re *certain* it should be wielded! (Now, that doesn’t mean the messengers Jesus sends are perfect or without fault; and there are plenty of passages in which we can meditate upon that. But this text is about whether we in our homes, towns, streets and daily lives will *receive* the Word of God or *reject* it... perhaps by blaming the laborers Jesus sent.)

We can lightheartedly admit, it may be tempting for a congregation to write in to the pastor's Call documents, "You can preach in the pulpit, but don't dare proclaim the Word into our homes, streets, towns, or lives!" But, which of the **commandments** is seen from the pulpit? That's easy: the Third. So, is it any coincidence people often convince themselves the pastor only cares about their Remembering the Sabbath by being in the pew? But, where do God's other commandments govern? Where do sins against the other nine commandments *happen*? In daily life, in our homes, towns, and streets!

Does the Word proclaimed into my life *prick at the heart*? That's what the Word of God rightly-applied *does*! Does it sometimes pierce to the bone and marrow? That's what the Word of God rightly-applied *does*!...because: Christ died for *sinners*; Christ's blood atoned for *sins*! The preaching of the cross does not go to the ends of the earth so that supposedly sinless Christians can nod their head in agreement and then go live their daily life in self-righteous immunity from what Christ has just preached to them.

No, you are *not* sheltered from what Christ preaches to you. Which means you are not sheltered from these authoritative words of God: "Behold, I will extend peace to [Jerusalem] like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, **so I will comfort you,**" the

Lord says to you *because you are not sheltered from the preaching of His Word!*

Those words of ‘parental consolation’ are for you! – *from God! For you!* Recall, those of us studying Galatians, how we heard last week that Paul spoke to the Galatians with both fatherly rebuke and motherly affection. And, why does *Paul* speak that way but because he is a messenger of *Christ*, who speaks that way.

Even after 18 years preaching, the pastor need not look at the people and say, “Oh, dear God, why are they not perfect people?” but rather, “Oh, dear heavenly Father, what wonderful grace you have lavished upon this congregation that these are still your dear sheep; each who sits at the foot of Your pulpit and gathers at Your altar is still your baptized child... despite all the temptations of the world, all the false gospels that they hear in their towns, streets, and even their homes, despite the imperfection of their under-shepherd... You not only have called them to repent and despair of such snares, but: They repent. And You forgive them. And You love them, strengthen them, and sustain them as a dear father cares so devotedly for his dear children.”

Isn’t that the love of God *for you?* – the wonderful grace of God lavished upon unworthy sinners – to which Jesus appeals when he appeals to “the mighty works” done in Chorazin and Bethsaida. You see, it’s not just preaching – as if that isn’t heaven-on-earth enough... but it’s also the mighty works of God done right in your

midst, right in your life... In Chorazin and Bethsaida what were those mighty works but works that pointed to Jesus as the Christ. But now, for you, mighty works not merely to point to Jesus as the Christ, but to be forgiving and life-giving gifts to you from Jesus the Christ, giving you Jesus the Christ. The mighty works of Baptism, of Absolution, of the Supper – are they not infinitely more beneficial to you than the miracles that testified to Jesus’ divinity? These are not about testifying *to*, but about flowing *from* Jesus’ divinity! ... mighty works poured out in the house of God, at the altar of God, but *for* the life you live in your home, streets, town.

“The mighty works.” Yes, the heavens may declare the glory of God – that’s how the Introit says it; and Peter uses the phrase in his Pentecost sermon: “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs” Yes, all of those were also “mighty works.” But, neither the heavens above nor the miracles Jesus did below bring the forgiveness of sins into your daily life... only the Word and Sacraments – only *those* mighty works – give and administer and share Christ’s righteousness with you.

And, as they do, nothing less than the kingdom of God comes to you. That’s what the world can never understand... not even when Jesus sends out the seventy-two – that the servants would actually carry with them, bring with them the kingdom of God itself. Jesus anticipated that those messengers would be turned away just as often as they were received. And he told them, “...go into their

streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless, know this: *the kingdom of God has come near!*’

But also among and to those who hoped in God’s promises, the refrain is the same, as Jesus commands his messengers, “Heal the sick in [the town] and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” ... to their great joy and comfort.

In other words, *whether or not* it is received, the kingdom of God objectively comes among sinners by Christ sending messengers to do His bidding. It’s not a figment of the faithful’s imagination, nor a ‘hope-bubble’ burst by the cynic. You don’t get to decide *if* the kingdom of God really comes to earth, is *truly* a part of daily life. With *faith in* Christ, you benefit from it; with *skepticism toward* Christ, you let it bypass you like a rain cloud passing over parched land. But it’s not yours to subjectively claim whether Jesus and His kingdom are *true* in daily life.

Christ brings his kingdom into your daily life – even teaches you to pray for it, “Thy kingdom come!” – and yet, the supposed great offense (the scandal!) – He does so by sending laborers to bring the kingdom to you: to proclaim His Word in pulpits, apply it to your daily lives, and administer its benefits to you in Baptism, Absolution, and the Supper.

And so we pray, “Thy kingdom come”... and we ought humbly consider how thoroughly he answers our prayer... that, by the

faithful wielding of Word and Sacrament, his messengers bring the kingdom of God so intimately *to you* that every day of your life is lived out, not just “in hopes of” the kingdom of God, but you are baptismally living daily life *in* the kingdom of God and thus ought live daily life *through the lens of* the kingdom of God. That’s your inheritance as a baptized child and heir of the kingdom of God!

So, receive the gifts of his kingdom among you; live out your daily lives in your homes, streets, towns, cities as baptized children of his kingdom; humbly repent, and joyfully receive His forgiveness... and rejoice that your names are written in the kingdom of heaven.

In the Name of the Father
And of the Son
And of the Holy Spirit.
+ AMEN +

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