

Sent Luke 10:1-20 4th Sun. After Pentecost Jul 7, 2019

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. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves....Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Luke 10 Sent

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, have you learned how to swim? If you did, how did you learn? When I learned, we began with play in the shallows and to advance, you needed to stay after and float on your front and kick your feet. Then floating on your back and kicking on your back. Only then did you move to deeper water and learn the front crawl and only after that to the really deep water where you would dive. Some other people learned with a different system - get thrown in deep water and figure it out. But regardless, if you are going to learn to swim, at some point you need to trust that the water will hold you up, that you can move and not struggle to stay up. In fact, that is about when you can say you can swim.

Jesus sends out 70 of his disciples, 2 by 2, to the villages he would go to. In doing so, he shows the kingdom of God. He shows it to the villagers, as his disciples come without moneybag, knapsack, or sandals. They carry nothing but the word of God. They don't seek the wisdom of men on the road, but depend entirely on God. And as they do so, they show the kingdom of God is near, as the word is preached, as the sick are healed, as demons are driven out. And Jesus comes to those places where the word is preached. Surely Jesus sent his word to them, and he is gracious in his word.

And the word of God is sent to us as well, that the kingdom of God is near. Pastors are called and preach the word. And in the service, after the kingdom is preached in the word, Christ comes in his very body and blood to us. Surely the kingdom of God is near. Don't let the dust on your feet testify that you avoided the kingdom, but receive Christ gladly as he comes in word and spirit. Christ has sent his word to you and comes to you.

But Jesus also testifies to those he sent, that they could preach the kingdom - not through their wit, their planning, their preparedness. Not by their cleverness in picking the right influencers to start with and then the others would follow. Not by showing off their lavish lifestyle. No,. They could preach the kingdom using only what God gave them, his word. And they would learn that God would hold them up, that they would not sink and they would not fall. More than the water holds swimmers up, God would hold them up. His faithfulness to them would testify as well as the word they received. They speak the same message, that God is faithful in saving them

What was their training - hearing the word of God from Jesus. Seeing him act in the world. Eating the bread he gave them. And they were ready, and the spirits were subject to them and Satan fell from from his perch at the word they preached, and that word was the kingdom, and that word was Christ the king. God sent the 70 and they saw his kingdom come.

God would send us as well. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray for workers. And be a worker. Yet so often we say we are not ready. But have we not heard his word at church and bible study. He taught his disciples 3 years. Some of you have been in bible study more than 50. You have heard his word and seen Jesus born in human flesh, die for your sin, and

rise for your life. You know your name is written in the book of life. So fear not the devil, much less people. God has given you assurance, in his word of Christ, in baptism into Christ, in the supper of Christ's very body and blood. You do not know all the answers, but you know better. You know the one who is the answer, and he comes near where his word is preached. Don't be afraid to get in the water. He will hold you up.

And if you say I haven't been in bible study 3 years, much less 50, and you think that excuses you, watch out. If the dust of the feet of those who preach testified against those who did not receive a savior who had not yet risen, how much more those who have a risen savior. If you haven't heard Jesus and his kingdom coming to you for 3 years in bible study, start today. Don't let the dust testify against you.

Devils will fall and the word will be preached, for some villages do receive. But what if yours don't? What if you do say the word and no one listens. If you fail, and when you fail, fear not. If you say the word and some do not hear, God is faithful. Our joy is not in our efforts but in our Lord. He come to us and writes our names in heaven.

God has sent his word. God has sent his Christ. God has sent his Kingdom.

God has sent his preachers. And God sends you. One message. One Lord. One baptism. One church, that the gates of hell will not stand against. Be with that church and share its message here. Be with that church and share it abroad, that Christ will come there as well. Amen.