

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

We have said many times in the last few weeks, and already this morning again, that we are now in the “green season.”

- Green, a time of growth.
- Growth for each of us individually.
- Growth together as the body of Christ here at Hope.
- And growth in the Church and the overall kingdom of God.
- They do all go together.

Okay.....oh boy.....

- So here we go again.
- Talking about evangelism.
- Talking about me inviting others to church.

Pastor.....

- I have to worry about myself.
- Other people can make up their own minds.
- And they won't listen to me anyway.

And even further with all that.....

- Pastor.....I just don't have the skills.
- I don't have the capabilities.
- I'm not trained.
- I'm uncomfortable with all that.
- That is just not what I am all about.

Well.....if you are in any of these categories.....you are not alone.

- Most people are uncomfortable with this.
- Most people want to avoid it.
- Provisions are being made in our bulletin today towards restarting our evangelism committee.
- And I have good news for you. It is not too late.
- We still do have openings and you can join our Evangelism Committee.
- Please see me after the service.

Today in our Gospel reading Jesus teaches us and tells us much about being workers in His kingdom.

- In all four of the Gospels, this account, read this morning, is only told in the Book of Luke.
- It is about Jesus sending out the 72.

But it is more than that. It is also all about you and me being sent also. All of us being sent.

- The 72 here means more than the original disciples.
- More than the pastor.
- More than even the evangelism committee.
- All of us are called to be workers in the kingdom.

To tell others your story about what Jesus has done for you.

- To invite them to see Jesus.
- To get to know this Jesus who is your comfort, companion, strength, joy.
- Your forgiveness of sins and your life. Now and for all eternity.

The mission that was given to the 12, was also given to the 72, and to all those who have gone before us, and to you and me.

- We are the next ones in the line of succession that has been given the privilege, that has been given the responsibility to invite others to see Jesus.

Recent polls show that 62 percent of non-Christians and lapsed Christians are willing to listen.

- And laity have opportunities pastors don't have.
- You are more among others. You are involved in similar daily activities.
- You can relate to them and be better received by them.

And this morning we are reminded that you are not sent out without anything.

- In our Gospel reading Jesus gives us the agenda, the instruction, and the promise that He goes with us.
- I invite you to look at this further with me in our Gospel reading.

Please don't shut this out.

- As a Christian, as a follower of Christ, you have been called to share Christ with others; however and whenever that opportunity may be.

- It is as if we have been given an assignment and we need to hear and understand the instructions for it.

Scripture uses the metaphor of the harvest field for those opportunities we have to bring others to Christ.

- And no matter how plentiful the harvest field is, the crop will be small if workers are scarce.

Our Gospel reading begins with Jesus sending them out 2 by 2.

- You can go alone.
- But if you are not comfortable or need support.....walk before you run.
- That is, take someone with you.
- Receive help/encouragement from others.

And where are we to go?

- Every town and place where Jesus has gone.
- That is, all places.
- No place or no one is exempt. No age is exempt.

And He tells us to pray earnestly.

- Our sermon hymn sang just a few minutes ago, “Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling.”
- Do you remember the words we sang at the end of verse 3?
- “With your prayers and with your bounties, you can do what God commands.”
- “You can be like faithful Aaron holding up the prophet’s hands.”

This in reference to the poisonous snakes the Children of Israel encountered in the wilderness.

- Moses was to hold up the bronze cross so the people could look at it and be saved.
- His arms got tired.
- And Aaron went about the task of holding up Moses’ hand so all could see the cross.
- Do you earnestly pray for our evangelism efforts and those who are not members in the flock?
- Sheep that have either never been with us or wandered off.
- Each of us can be earnestly in prayer.

And then Jesus tells us it will not be easy. That does not mean we are not to go out but we need to be prepared.

- Jesus’ specific words, “We are lambs in the midst of wolves.”
- Polls say that 50 percent of millennials say evangelism is morally wrong.

We go forth in full knowledge of the world's enmity.

- But in our proclamation we will show that we are not ashamed of Jesus and His work.

And then Jesus tells us something that turns us away from worldly thinking to trusting in Him.

- He has just told us that we are lambs among wolves.
- Lambs among wolves. We better take provisions.

But then Jesus says.....

- Carry no moneybag.
- Carry no knapsack.
- Take no sandals.

These things all represent things of the world.

- They represent things we would take to put trust in ourselves.
- All these things are to be foregone and left behind.
- Our ways and our mission is opposite worldly thinking.
- Rather, we carry in ourselves, in our own bodies, Jesus' redemption and His power.

We put our trust in the Lord and His promise that not even the devil will hurt us.

- And we cling to the words of Luke 12:12.
- "For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you are to say."

Jesus also says something else to us that at first may seem a little strange.

- "Greet no one on the road."
- What's this?
- I thought we were supposed to be friendly.
- I thought Christ was for all people.

What Jesus is saying here is that this is not a time for casual talk with no purpose.

- There is an urgency and mission that we are about.
- We are to keep our eyes and focus on Jesus and the work in the kingdom.
- It is important. We are to be diligent. It has eternal ramifications.

And then Jesus turns our attention to the agenda for our going.

- We are to greet others in peace.
- We ourselves are to be peaceful but we also bring to them the peace of Christ.
- The peace that has come down to us from above in Jesus we can now give.....
- And, even receive back if it is not accepted by others.

Jesus also says we are to heal and perform miracles.

- Heal people?
- How does that work?
- We are to pray for the sick.
- And you come with the medicine of immortality.

And we are to proclaim that the kingdom of God has come near.

- Christ is present in you and with you and in your proclaiming of the Kingdom of God.
- Christ is with you in the proclaiming of the Word and within His Church.
- Even His very body and blood when Holy Communion is offered, it will be here in a few minutes.

Yet, as we know, not everyone will receive you.

- If that be the case, Jesus says to go into the streets and wipe the dust off your sandals.
- That is, announce to them the coming judgment.
- But also tell them that, nevertheless, the kingdom of God has come near.

That is, you are continuing the ministry of Jesus Himself.

- Jesus has won the victory and salvation can still be there's if they turn to Him before judgment day.

Jesus at the end of our reading, also gives to us an additional warning about all this.

- He directs our attention away from thoughts about sensational success to contemplation and fears on heavenly things.

Pride and a theology of success are tools satan uses to attack us and thwart the ministry.

- It is not about us.
- Any success enjoyed is not our doing.
- It is always about Jesus.

Jesus also gives a warning to cities where Christ is not received.

- Verses 13 through 15 of our Gospel reading.
- **“Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.”**
- Chorazin was near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus did much of His ministry and performed many of His miracles.
- Bethsaida is where Jesus fed the 5,000 plus women and children.
- And Capernaum, the city Jesus said would be brought down to Hades, is where He had as His headquarters for His Galilean ministry.

He says judgment will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon.

- These were Gentile cities on the other side of Israel near the Mediterranean Sea.
- Jesus did no preaching or miracles in these cities.
- This is serious business and salvation is for all.

So, as you sit here this morning the thought may be that this is too big, or, what can I do?

- Starting small but going forth in the name of Jesus, big things happen.
- Even big, little things. The salvation of one soul is huge.

But let me give you a practical example of starting small and how God can use us.

- Many of you know Sandy and I had a pastor and his wife, friends of ours, stay with us this week.

Our pastor friend told me this account for them.

- When the pandemic hit, people were stuck at home.
- A LAY MEMBER in his church said we have to reach out to people.
- So he worked it out and set it up for a 2 minute phone devotion to be done each day.
- He worked with the phone company and even got it at no cost.

Our pastor friend began doing the devotion.

- He records it and people call in and get a devotion. Going back to what had been done in the past.
- He then received a call to another church on the other side of Nebraska.
- He assumed the daily phone devotion would end.

But the lay person who began all this wanted our pastor friend to continue.

- The lay person went back to the phone company on this.
- They said their employees are now enjoying the daily devotion and they would continue providing it for free.

Our friend, Glen, has since now continued this prayer devotion for over 2 years.

- He has over 100 listeners each day.

Recently the local newspaper wanted to do an article on this.

- It was the lead story on the front page of their newspaper.
- It was picked up by the Associated Press and retransmitted to California and now overseas.

Glen said he in no way could have imagined this would happen.

- Started by A LAY PERSON, working with the pastor, a simple intent and God used it and caused it to grow.

Our Lord has plans for each of us.

- He works in strange and mysterious ways to use us.

So where do we go with all this today?

- It seems each of us has a few options.
- One, we can ignore this. Just go forward and forget about it. It is not for me.
- Second, you can have great intentions but busyness and hesitancy and other things get in the way and nothing happens.

Or, you can heed God's call to you. And this invitation and call is made to each of us at all ages.

- Pray about all this.
- Tell others.
- And maybe even accept the invitation in the bulletin today to join our Evangelism Committee.

Dear fellow members of Hope.....

- You are part of the privileged group to whom the Father, through Jesus, has revealed the secrets of God.
- And Jesus says, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."

- And Jesus also says, “That he who hears you, hears Me.”

There is no greater joy then when the Holy Spirit works through you to bring someone to Jesus.

- Will you stand in Jesus’ stead and by His command?
- Amen.

(Please remain seated) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

TODAY INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS.