

Sunday, June 14, 2020 🕒 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

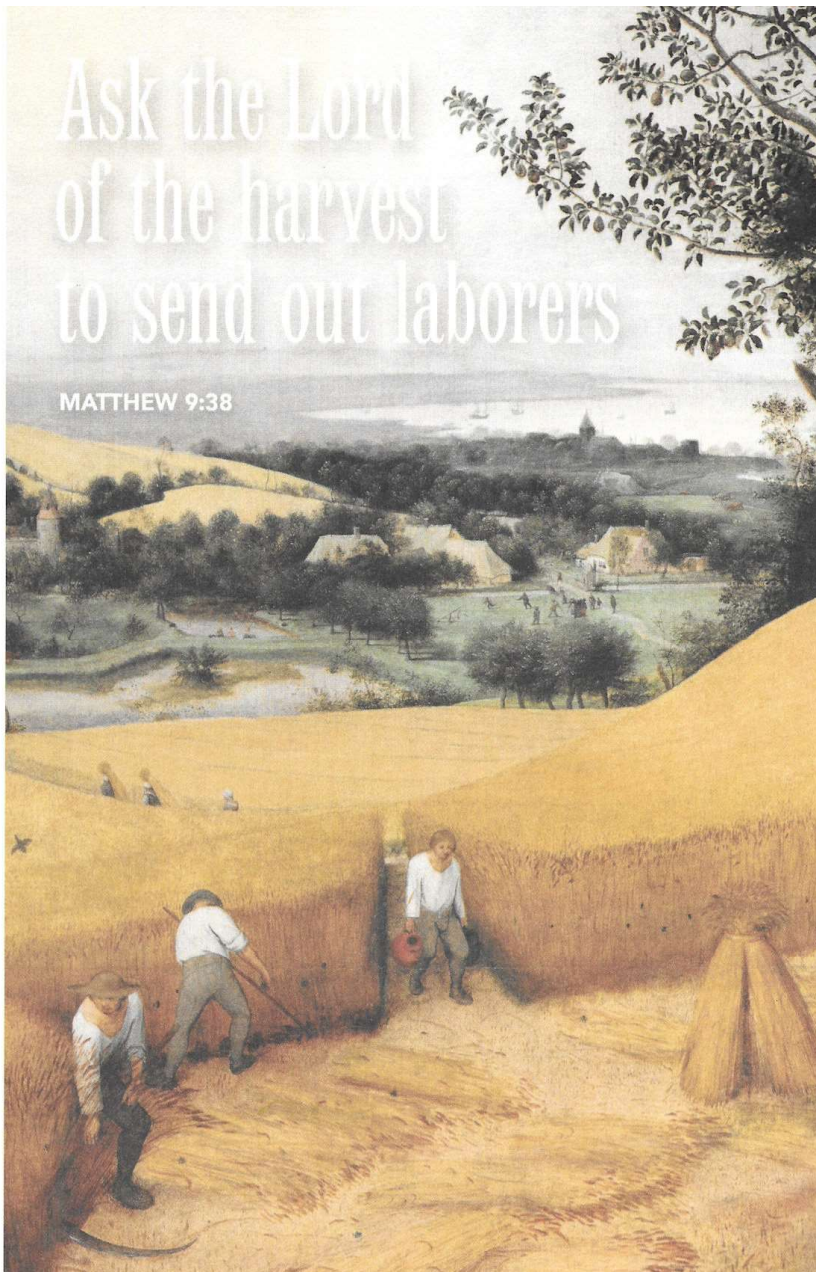
Harvest of Compassion

Jesus sends out his disciples to labor for the kingdom. He uses the metaphor of a harvest and says there is plenty to harvest but that there are not enough workers. The church has seen itself throughout the centuries as being sent to labor for the harvest. Most often, the assumption has been that the harvest is people, and the goal is making them members of the church. Much of the missionary impulse and institutional focus of the church have been about increasing numbers and making more members.

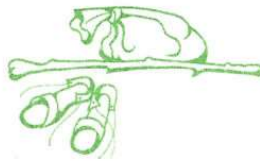
But notice how Jesus describes the labor of the harvest: proclaim, cure, cleanse, raise, cast out. The focus is not on making people a part of the church (although welcoming others is certainly part of the good news). The goal of the labor—the harvest—is healing, helping, liberating, renewing. The world is full of great unmet needs, and many people are suffering; hopelessness and despair abound. The harvest of the kingdom is a harvest of compassionate deeds.

What happens when no one is available to harvest the crops? They sit in the field and eventually go bad. What happens to people when no one joins in the harvest of compassion? People continue to suffer, lives are diminished, and God's intentions of abundant life for all are left to rot. Jesus is inviting all who are willing to join in the harvest of compassion, and the time is now.

What happens when the church shifts its mission from harvesting people to harvesting acts of compassion? The witness of the church becomes rooted in concrete acts of care for others, and suffering is alleviated. The good news of Jesus is known in the great ingathering of compassion and justice done in Jesus' name. It begins at the table every Sunday, when we celebrate the feast of the kingdom that Jesus himself brought to fruition through his own life, death, and resurrection. May that gift now bear fruit in our lives by his grace.



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Celebrate

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Moses tells the Israelites that they are called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy people. Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From the Lord's table we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

Prayer of the Day

God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Exodus 19:2-8a

At Sinai God assured Israel, "You shall be my treasured possession," and commissioned them to serve as mediating priests for the nations. The people commit themselves completely to God's will.

[The Israelites] had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my cov-

enant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

⁷So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do."

Second Reading

Romans 5:1-8

We are no longer God's enemies but have peace with God because we were brought into a right relationship with God through Christ's death.

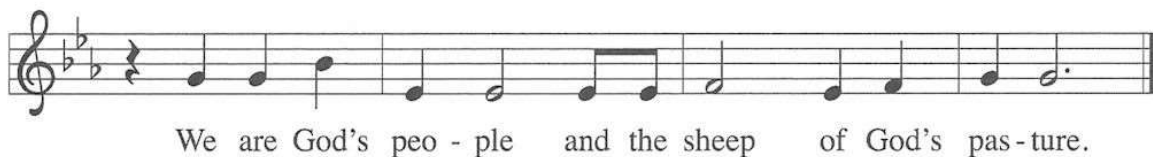
Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only

that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our

continued

Psalm

Psalm 100; refrain, Ps. 100:3



Make a joyful noise to the LORD, ¹all you lands!

²Serve the LORD with gladness; come into God's presence ¹with a song.

³**Know that the LORD is God, our maker to whom ¹we belong;
we are God's people and the sheep ¹of God's pasture. **R****

⁴Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving
and the ¹courts with praise;
give thanks and bless God's ¹holy name.

⁵**Good indeed is the LORD, whose steadfast love is ¹everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from ¹age to age. **R****

hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a

righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Gospel

Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

The mission of Jesus' followers is to continue the mission of Jesus himself. Here, he instructs his first disciples as to how they might proclaim the gospel through their words and deeds.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

^{10:1}Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. [⁹Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for

laborers deserve their food. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

¹⁶"See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; ²⁰for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; ²²and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."]

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you bring us together and call us your own. Bless theologians, teachers, and preachers who help us grow in faith (*following the examples of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the teacher Macrina, whom we commemorate today*). Guide your church, that we might be a holy people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy One, the whole earth is yours. Where there is fire, bring cool air and new growth. Where there is flooding, bring abatement. Where there is drought, bring rain. Inspire us to care for what you have provided. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy One, we have created divisions you will not own. In places of conflict (*especially*), raise up leaders who work to develop lasting peace and reconciliation. Encourage organizations and individuals who care for all forced to leave their homes. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy One, you care for those who are harassed and helpless. Protect and defend those who are abused. Heal those who are sick. Feed all who hunger. Empower all whose voices go unheard, and help us respond to the pressing needs of our neighbors. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy One, you provide a plentiful harvest of gifts and resources. Prepare us to labor and gather the fruits of this congregation, that we might discover new ways of living. Minister to us in our work, that we do not lose heart. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Holy One, you bring all people to yourself. We give thanks for the holy people who have gone before us (*especially*). Sustain us in your mission until the day you bear us up to join the saints in light. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45. **Tuesday** 2 Thessalonians 2:13—3:5. **Wednesday** Proverbs 4:10-27. **Thursday** Psalm 69:7-10 [11-15] 16-18. **Friday** Jeremiah 18:18-23. **Saturday** Luke 11:53–12:3. **Third Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Onesimos Nesib, translator, evangelist, died 1931) Jeremiah 20:7-13; Psalm 69:7-10 [11-15] 16-18; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39.

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