

From the Pastor's Desk...

The Dwindling Few

"..for we are many."—Mark 5:9



In one of my first seasons as soccer coach, some years ago, just a couple of youth showed up. Then it began to rain, and I wondered if we would have enough for practice. The skies cleared, and more youth showed up and we ended up having a nice practice after all.

In the story above, Jesus encounters a presence of evil spirits in a man with wild behavior. When Jesus inquires of his name, they evil spirits boast their name to be Legion and there are many of them. Legion in Bible times meant a squad of 6,000 Roman soldiers. The implication being that Jesus was outnumbered and out manned and therefore should retreat.

With all the voices in the world that lead us away from God, it might seem like the church is dwindling away. We might seem small or outnumbered in many settings. Elijah certainly felt like that, when he retreated from Ahab and Jezebel in the cave. Moses and Aaron likely felt alone, when it was them against the many grumbling Israelites. Or consider Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the only ones in the entire nation who would not bow down to the King.

For a disciple to feel alone or outnumbered, is nothing unusual. But that feeling is quite an illusion. God is always well represented in ways that we do not always see. When Jesus was talking to Pilate, he said, :“Do you not realize that I can call down more than 12 legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). It was a kind of response to the boast of the many evil spirits.

Or how about the disciples after Jesus ascended into heaven? They may have felt alone at first when it was just them. But later they find themselves in the upper room praying with 120 of their closest brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 1:15). Then the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and thousands would be added to the church.

To read the newspapers, or listen to the radio or other media, its easy for a disciple to feel alone and discouraged in today's world. It may feel like the number of believers is dwindling fast, but that is a key strategy of the devil. He wants all believers to feel like they are overwhelmed and outnumbered. He whispers in our ear that, No one is on our side. Don't believe it!

We have a powerful witness and testimony about Christ our Lord and what he has done and continues to do in our lives daily. But every so often, we do need to rally together, and be encouraged by one another. Then we are reminded of our identity as the Lord's army. We are reminded of our strength as the chosen and redeemed, and when we remember that God is on the Throne. Amen.

In His Service,

Pastor Chris