**7/6/25**

**The Sermon with No Name**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

I would venture that you are sitting out there in those pews and at home on the conference call wanting to be fed. You want to be fed at the table, and you want to be fed with the Word. You are here for fellowship and for peace. You want to be in a community of people who share similar faith and beliefs that you do. Then again, maybe you are here because you are broken and tired. You want a safe space to recharge and to hit that proverbial reset button. You are here to mend what is broken because of news you recently got, or the grief you are still struggling to process. You want to pray and worship and not just be alone. Perhaps you are here because you are on vacation and needed a place to worship. You want to be here so that you do not miss out on a step in your continued faith walk. You are here because that is what you do whether you are in or out of town. You want and know that church and community are where it is at. Then of course there is the new person who just got invited to church and you are here not knowing what exactly to expect. You wanted to be responsible and respectful of the invitation you got from your friend, family member, or the person that randomly started talking to you at Wawa. You are here because you wanted to see and hear if this was for you. Quite frankly, you wanted a change in your life, and you wanted to see if this was it. Well…. let me reassure you that regardless of why you are here, or even how you managed to get here, that you are here by no mistake, and it indeed was God’s plan, and thanks be to God for that!

Yes, Vicar Vince is at it again with an entirely awkward start to the Sermon today. However, my awkwardness and my goofiness are not just simply a blunder. For if you really think about it then you come to realize that our Gospel Reading is not something we can honestly really picture. We are not in a time or place where people just wander about and show up on our doorstep without a call or even a text first. We are not in a time or place where we just allow any stranger to come into our home, let alone feed them or provide them a place to rest. We are not in a time or place where people are out there on the streets curing the sick and proclaiming the good news without us thinking that they are being rather suspicious, or that they have some kind of alternative agenda. We may be indeed be in the garden state, but we are not in a time and place that we have been out working on the farm and are called to something entirely different and extravagant. We are definitely not in a time or place that if someone did not treat them right that the only thing they would do is shake some sand from their shoes and simply tell them that “the kingdom of God has come near.” (2)

So, how do we unpack this story that we heard in our Gospel Reading and put it into some kind of framework or context that we can even imagine or relate to somehow? How do we get this story to be realistic or even possible to or even for us? How can we be a part of this Living Word in today’s time and context and this not just be some awkward story or history lesson? How does the start of my Sermon even connect to what we heard in our Gospel Reading today? I hope to answer these questions, and possibly a little bit more, as I dive into this text with you right here. I also thank you for allowing me to do just that, and be able to share it and explore it so that we can make this Word come to life in our time and in this very place.

So, let’s get to it… First off, we hear that Jesus does not ask these folks to do anything that he would not do himself. Jesus actually has them going out there so that they can learn what to do while he is still with them. They are following the very example that he has set before them time and time again, and he is actually allowing them to come back for instruction and feedback following their journey. Those are some signs of a good teacher right there! Secondly, we hear that Jesus has them go out with nothing because there is some urgency in their work. There is just too much ground for him to cover, and too many people that need to hear and feel the presence of his ministry. Jesus not only empowers these folks to go and do, but he also gives them authority. He also trusts that things will be handled if these folks are indeed genuine. Talk about trust and delegating while showing the real signs of a leader! Thirdly, we hear that Jesus has them go out in pairs for safety and support. He is aware that some of the roads are rarely traveled, and that is why they are instructed to focus on the journey, and not everyone who comes into their path before they arrive at their desired location. Jesus is also aware that people may grow weary should they meet with a little opposition or rejection. Talk about a caring and loving parent right there! Fourthly, something that I get reminded of often in seminary classes, and even life, we hear Jesus remind them that they are not only going to do things or work, but they are going to create relationships and change lives. Furthermore, in this very pursuit they are bringing something, and even in need of something themselves, and that very something is hospitality. Jesus knew that they would be able to gain some kind of trust if they did not come around flashing their fancy wares or things that they had, and gave even out of what little they did have. He knew that they would eventually be provided with the very same thing they were providing, and that indeed is hospitality. That right there is trusting in God’s creation, and we are fully aware that Jesus trusted his Father even to death on a cross. Fifth, and last, well at least for today’s dialogue, we hear Jesus call them back to what they should really focus on. He does not desire them to be rejoicing and overjoyed by the work he has called them to do. Jesus does not want them to be celebrating when there is more work to be done as well. Furthermore, he wants them to focus on the very reason why their ministry was successful regardless of the outcome, and that is because their names have already been written in heaven. He has shown his faithful saving action time and time again, and he has reminded them that his grace and mercy for all. What a redirection, what a reminder, and what a gift, what a reward right there! Alleluia to that!

Alright, now that we have broken things down and now that we have fought through that text a little bit, let’s see what else we have to deal with and unpack here. This is precisely where I call us all back to that weird breakdown at the beginning of my sermon. It was a reminder that just because we are all under one roof, and on one conference call, that we all have different stuff going on. We all have come from different places, or have different experiences. As we go out there in the world and do the very work that we have been called and commissioned to, as we go two by two with a friend or family member, and with the Spirit guiding and supporting us. “As we engage others, we must first be well-grounded in God’s peace, the peace that passes understanding. God’s shalom is more than being calm. It is confidence in God’s abiding presence so that we also share that presence with others. Engaging others means not treating them as objects upon which we act, but as sacred others with whom we are called to be fully and peacefully present.” (5) Let me repeat that last line from the Commentary that I read on Working Preacher written by Amy G. Oden. Let me allow her very point to resonate with you like it did with me, and let it drive home a very crucial point that further emphasizes the goofy start that I had to this sermon today. “Engaging others means not treating them as objects upon which we act, but as sacred others with whom we are called to be fully and peacefully present.” (5) Be one with the person who you encounter and are speaking with, be genuine, and do not keep a scorecard as if you are in competition with one another to save souls. Do the work you are called to do, share the good news, and more importantly, let God do the rest!

Okay, now that some, or hopefully all those questions from earlier have been answered, now that I have explained my mindset and rather awkward start to things, we need to go ahead and wrap this up. With all that being said, I know that we all are observing what is going on in the world whether we watch the news or just simply watch the people and things going on around us. We are fully aware that there are several people out there that no longer come to church, or that have no identifiable faith at all. We are fully aware that there are people hurting, and there are people seeking. We are fully aware that this world and the people in it are a mess in more ways than one, and for that fact that everything and everyone has always been if the focus is only on this world and tangible things. We are also fully aware that if we lose our focus, if we are just doing things of our own conviction and of our own accord, then things will not turn out as we desire or as they should. So, we need to stay faithful and do precisely what Jesus called these seventy-two followers to do back then, and those of us to do right now. The words in our Gospel Reading may ring truer than ever these days as “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,” (2) but I know we can turn that around, and I know we will. Let us indeed go in peace, share the good news, and serve and love one another.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 (NRSVUE)**

Jesus commissions harvesters and laborers to go where he would go and do what he would do. Risking hardship and danger in exchange for the experience of great joy, they offer peace and healing as signs that the reign of God is near.

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ 6 And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’

16 “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” 18 He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19 Indeed, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 July 6th, 2025

 4th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

 In the receiving and giving of gifts, the reign of God comes to human community

 July 6, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

 Richard W. Swanson

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

 This is the third passage in the last four weeks that invites us to step out of the

 reactivity that the world around us reinforces.

 July 7, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

 Amy G. Oden

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

 If no one promoting peace is present, God’s peace will find no place to take hold

 July 3, 2022

 Commentary on Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

 Jeannine K. Brown

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

 When we think of Jesus’ followers we think of the twelve apostles, but there were

 more.

 July 7, 2013

 Commentary on Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

 Michael Rogness

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

 A Challenging Journey

 July 4, 2010

 Commentary on Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

 Marilyn Salmon

(9) Luthermatrix

 The blog of a lutheran pastor, writer, and political animal.

 Saturday, July 05, 2025

 God works through common things