



Roanoke, Virginia

July 3, 2022

“Mission Mindset”

Luke 10:1-11

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Our scripture reading for today comes from the gospel of Luke. As you see in your bulletin, we are commissioning our Bibles & Bricks Youth Mission Team today as they depart for the Dominican Republic this coming Saturday. The team of 14 will spend the week leading vacation bible school for some 300 local kids and working on some construction tasks for the newly constructed Medical Clinic. I say this now because our passage in Luke today is the commissioning of the 70 (some manuscripts have 72) to go out. Jesus sends this group of “laborers” out to every town and place ahead of himself... to prepare the way. My sermon today is specifically directed to our mission team, of which I am a part of—and this is actually a great lesson in preaching, that most of the time we really are preaching to ourselves.

But I do hope this message of being sent out, this lesson which I am calling “Mission Mindset”, is heard by us all as our own commissioning to be laborers of the harvest.

Listen now to Jesus’ commission of the 70 in Luke 10:1-11, and listen for God’s word to us this day...

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 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. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there



who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 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. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, '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.'

Could you imagine, getting prepared for a long journey, a long vacation, a week-long mission trip to the Dominican Republic, and taking nothing with you?

This coming Saturday, our youth mission team will be taking loads of supplies that you have graciously donated. We are preparing 12 suitcases loaded to the brim with food and supplies for the Solid Rock guesthouse pantry, with lots of recreation stuff like balls and bubbles, with our Vacation Bible School supplies to serve the estimated 300 kids that will attend next week, and a suitcase full of our own personal belongings.

We have prepared for our mission trip by filling out permission forms, health forms, behavior and team covenants. We have gone over our packing list, and we have gone over the packing list, and we have gone over the packing list. We do not want to forget to take anything!

As we have prepared, one passage of focus in our Mission Team Devotional is on the sending of the Twelve as told in the Gospel of Mark. What we are considering in our preparation is how Jesus instructs the twelve to take nothing with them (much like the instruction we have here in our reading for today)—Jesus instructs them to take nothing—well, almost nothing. The Sending of the Twelve is in all three synoptic Gospels. There are some differences, however. In Matthew, Jesus instructs the disciples to take “no gold, silver, or copper in your belts, nor sandals, nor a staff.” In Luke, it says, “take nothing for your journey, no staff, bag, bread, money, and do not have two tunics,” and in Mark Jesus says, “no bread, no bag, no money, not two tunics, but take with you a staff and sandals.”

I chose Mark's account for our devotional because I like Mark's account the best... at least we would get to take a staff and wear sandals to protect our feet...

I believe shoes are a requirement by Solid Rock International... so really we are just following the rules.

Nevertheless, we have prepared our stuff! I mean, we have all heard the saying: failing to prepare is preparing to fail. So, we have done our best to prepare for what lies ahead of us next week.



But we have also prepared for our mission in ways that I believe align more with Jesus' instructions. We have prepared our minds and our spirits for the journey ahead. We have gotten to know one another on a deeper level, creating team cohesion and learning about one another's fears, excitements, and quirks. We have bonded as a group and as individuals. We have prayed. We have also prepared by slowing down, developing an awareness of our surroundings to see things and notice things we often miss in our busy lives.

Jesus, sending out the 70, does not equip them with material things. Rather, Jesus de-equips them saying, "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals," remove any physical barrier that may stand in the way of true presence. The only two things the commissioned group of 70 are to take with them are the consistent promise of peace and the knowledge of the presence of God's kingdom.

These are the two proclamations Jesus offers them as they journey out into the world: the promise of peace and the knowledge that God's kingdom has come near.

The first proclamation sounds simple enough: "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!'" Peace is the first word to offer those whom you encounter. This is the opening line Jesus instructs. The commissioned 70 are going out to people they have never met before. They are going "out like lambs in the midst of wolves" to a world that may not welcome them. But the opening line is always PEACE!

Notice, Jesus does not instruct them to take assessment of the house before making this proclamation. Jesus doesn't ask them to offer a questionnaire or survey to see if the house they are entering is a house that believes the same thing they believe in, lives the same way they live, or even eats the same food. Jesus does not tell them to do a risk assessment or pre-judge whether this house will be worth their time and their resources.

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!'"

This peace is not a simple hello or greeting. This is a peace that is representative of God's salvation, that is God's salvific *shalom*. This *shalom* is to be the opening word to all people.

Jesus goes on to say, "if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you." First, this instruction concludes and affirms that the 70 Jesus sends out do in fact possess peace. It is not an empty proclamation. "Your peace" Jesus says. "Your peace will rest on that person." As we engage with others, as the 70 did long ago, we must be grounded first in God's peace, the peace that surpasses all understanding. It is more than a calming presence. It is confidence in God's abiding presence with us, that then allows us to share that presence with others. This peace is the enfolding reality of God's love. It is the fulfilment of the promise as we read in the first chapter of Luke. It is a peace made known in the birth of Jesus



Christ, who came “to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:79)

This instruction of peace subverts the reactive nature we are so accustomed to in our everyday interactions. Extending peace, your peace, the peace we know from God’s abiding presence, means we no longer see others as objects upon which we act or react, but as sacred individuals, divine image-bearers, with whom we justly and peacefully engage.

But this peace may be conflictive because it will be confronted at times by the wolves of the world. There are wolves, people who we will encounter that do not share in peace or receive the peace we extend. Too often, in the face of opposition, our stance is one of reactive hostility, one of persuasion or indifference. But Jesus reassures us, and the 70, that peace is never lost. It is never wasted on any interaction because the peace you extend, if not received, will return to you.

Jesus equips us for our mission first with the promise of God’s abiding peace.

And the second proclamation is the knowledge of the nearness of God’s kingdom. The promise of the kingdom of God is not limited to only those who welcome those Jesus sends out. God’s kingdom is proclaimed in all encounters, whether accepted or rejected. This promise is for all! The new kinship that has come near, this new way of understanding all human relationships, is life changing. It is a transformative promise of God’s ordering and re-ordering of all things.

The debate of whether the number is 70 or 72 can be traced back to the list of nations in Genesis 10, where the Hebrew text lists 70 nations and the Septuagint (the Greek translation) lists 72. The list accounts for all the nations of the world, and so, the number here, implies that Jesus sends out this group of 70 to all nations of the world. This group is to tell the world—all the nations of the world—“the kingdom of God has come near!” We too are to proclaim this promise is to all the world!

Jesus’ commission here provides us with a Mission Mindset, a mindset of courage and humility. The courage here is the courage to be vulnerable. It is the courage to not carry with us the provisions needed for our journey, and the courage to accept the hospitality and support of those to whom we are ministering. This vulnerability is inescapable in the mission to which Jesus calls his disciples. In our mission, we are to take the stance of vulnerable dependence. We are accustomed, in our lives of privilege, to be the one giving, but we are now called to receive. We are accustomed to playing host, but now we are called to be guests. The Mission Mindset is courageous!

The Mission Mindset calls us to be humble as well. If we are not welcomed or the peace is not received, it is not our duty to convince. Do not let your pride get the best of you. We are



instructed to shake off the dust from our shoes and move on. Humility releases us from being weighed down by rejection and frees us from the paralyzing idea that we did something wrong. Humility allows a nonviolent response to opposition because no matter what the kingdom of God is still near!

We do not go out on mission with our own agenda, our own ideas of what salvation should look like. Humility calls us to be servants.

My favorite mission quote is from Lila Watson, who is an Aboriginal Activist and Social Changer, whose effort is to raise awareness of social injustice, racism, and colonialism in Australia. Her response to people who ask how they can help: “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, then let us work together.”

Humility provides a way of partnering with others, to seek liberation that is not of our own. It is joining God’s liberating work in the world.

The courage to be vulnerable and the call to be a humble servant is hard. It is hard and scary because it releases control and calls us to be open with others. The mission mindset of courage and humility is grounded in the two proclamations of God’s peace and of the nearness of God’s kingdom. It is a grounding in God’s activity, God’s movement in and through the world.

God is the God of the Harvest. We are called to be the laborers, laborers sent out to proclaim the good news of God’s transforming love and peace to all the world.

I wonder... how might you take the good news of Peace to those around you? How might you extend the peace of God we know in Jesus Christ? Maybe it is simply being present with those you encounter, without prejudice, seeking to truly see them as divine image-bearers, no matter their appearance or beliefs. How can you, in your everyday life, put into your own words Jesus’ proclamation “The kingdom of God has come near?” Perhaps it is telling someone “I can see God’s love around you right now.” Or maybe it is reassuring someone by saying “God is at work in your life.”

If I were to adapt Jesus’ instruction for our mission... it may go like this:

You are going out in pairs. The world can be scary, you need each other.

Take nothing with you, except God’s peace and God’s presence.

Take no wallet or credit card, nothing that will set you above others financially.

Lean into vulnerable dependence as a humble guest, rely on the hospitality of others.

Take no bag for your mission, all you need is what God has already put inside of you.



Take no cell phone. Put down the things that distract you from being truly present with one another.

Seek understanding from those you encounter.

And be urgent in proclaiming the good news of God's peace in this world; for wherever you go, know the kingdom of God has come near!

Beloved, the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few. May we be laborers for God and join in the work of proclaiming the good news of God's love to all the world.

Amen.

