

THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME
I. Because Christ Has Come
II. Christ Has Come in Word and Power
III. “The Kingdom Ours Remaineth”
Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2019 | PENTECOST
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
YEAR C

<i>Old Testament</i>	1 Kings 19:14–21
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalms 62, p 88
<i>New Testament</i>	Galatians 5:1, 13–25
<i>Gospel</i>	Luke 9:51–62
<i>Sermon Text</i>	Luke 10:1–12, 16–20

COMMUNION

GRANTS PASS

The Entrance Hymn or Introit – ELH 24 Lord, Open Thou My Heart to Hear

Chief Hymn – ELH 446 vv. 1-3, 7-8 What Is the World to Me?

Distribution Hymn – ELH 309 A Wondrous Mystery Is Here

Closing Hymn – ELH 327 v. 1 O Lord, We Praise Thee

MEDFORD

Psalm 62, p. 88

Opening Hymn - CW 282 Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear

Hymn of the Day – CW 477 What Is the World to Me?

Distribution Hymn - CW 309 Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord

Closing Hymn - CW 317 v. 1 O Lord, We Praise You

Luke 10:1–20 (ESV)

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹⁶ “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” ¹⁸ And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Dear fellow redeemed: The sending out of the seventy disciples is mentioned only in the Gospel of Luke. That's not surprising because Luke is the most thorough of the gospels, with the most universal connections with people. It is part of the section on the "Journey to Jerusalem" where Luke outlines the overarching words and deeds of Jesus.

From a human perspective, this was quite an undertaking. Think of the distance from Ashland to Glendale, or from Eugene to Springfield. That was the distance (about 50 miles) from Galilee to Judea. These seventy were to go two-by-two, so think of 35 villages, towns, communities in that distance. Jesus was coming to all of them, and they were to prepare the way.

They weren't called to preach, but to bestow the peace of Christ, to heal the sick and to proclaim, "The kingdom God has come near to you." From all that happened it was clear:

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I. Because Christ Has Come

Like us, these 72 disciples were vulnerable in the midst of a world that did not accept the Christ. Nevertheless, as with us here in this town, and regardless of their vulnerability, Christ was with them. This is something that was important for His followers to see – that where the word and promise of Christ is, there He is also. Without Christ, where would they have been? They went out as sheep among wolves and prevailed, could they have done that without Christ? Do you think for an instant that the sick would rise up strong and well, the powers of Satan be overthrown, and the peace of God rest upon human souls otherwise?

Luke underscores the presence of Christ when he records Jesus saying, ¹⁶ **"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."**

Today's skeptics asks in confusion, "Where in the world is God?" The answer is here: He is where His word and sacrament are. So where the disciples went, Christ went. Where their peace was offered, there Christ's peace was bestowed.

This peace is important. Do you know what this peace is? Three thousand five hundred years ago, the Lord commanded Aaron, ***"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ' "****"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."* (Numbers 6:22–27, NKJV) Likewise, Paul invoked the Lord, ***"and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*** (Philippians 4:7, NKJV)

Is this an emotional peace: Don't be upset? Is it the cessation of all hostilities? It is reconciliation with God. It is the forgiveness of your sins, and the gift of such righteousness that you are beloved of God, and counted as His dear child. It is only the Prince of Peace who brings such peace, and He is present in His words of peace.

This is peace for sinners. Consider what your sins have done. Sin always separates. Our sins have separated us from God, whose beauty, love, power and glory we cannot see. The things you say to people in your family to irk them and hurt them, the corrupt and venal words and deeds of politicians, the faithlessness of lust and the selfishness of our lives have put people at odds with one another. The Peace of God is yours because the Son of Peace has made satisfaction for our offences, brought perfect reconciliation and in the resurrection will truly "un-ring the bell" of all we have done wrong.

The everlasting Son of the Father through whom all was created, who was present with Abraham, in the burning bush, who accompanied the children of Israel, the Word of

God who was present with the prophets is the One who is present with this word of peace and forgiveness.

Because Christ Has Come to His People!

II. Christ Has Come in Word and Power

And He has come in Word and Power. The seventy-two returned and described it: ¹⁷ **The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”** ¹⁸ **And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.** ¹⁹ **Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.**

On the front of the Lectionary is a picture of Satan falling. The word of Christ came with power to heal the sick, give life to the dying, rescue those in bondage to the demonic servants of Satan.

It reminds me of the period in WWII when the enemy powers were defeated. The surrender had not yet been signed, but defeat lay on one side and victory on the other. We are in a great cosmic battle – one that extends beyond this place and time. We see Christ invading this world and overthrowing the power of this world, in the word that heals, gives life, grants peace, and forgives iniquity.

Now you might think that therefore we should face every success. Miracles! Church growth in the hundreds, thousands! Glory and wonder!

But Luke settles that in the previous chapter, where Peter had proclaimed Jesus “God’s Messiah,” and Jesus called Himself the “Son of Man.” Daniel tells us about that Son of Man: **“He was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.”** (Daniel 7:14, CSB)

So might His disciples then have thought they were on the cusp of glory. But Jesus told them what it means: **“saying, *“It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things***

and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.” (Luke 9:22, CSB)

He then goes on to say that we must take up our crosses.

So he sobers us up as well, putting these great successes in perspective: **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**

III. “The Kingdom Ours Remaineth”

If we are to be saved, then the Lord had to come in suffering and in mercy before coming in victory and in judgment.

Let that sink in.

We bring the peace of God into this world, but in vulnerability and even in danger. We bring peace to the world, but may have it thrown back in our faces. We bring the Gospel to many who refuse to receive it. We don’t wipe off the dust of their town literally, but we grieve over their loss and warn them of their doom.

And there may be times, as I remember in my life, where people flocked to the church and reveled in the word of life. But whichever it may be, **²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**

Our joy is in Christ, who gives us the kingdom, and “The Kingdom ours remaineth!”

AMEN.