

Pentecost C-6, 2007 Series
Jesus in the Nitty Gritty
Title: Jesus and the Other 75%
July 8, 2007
Luke 10: 1-11; 16-20

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ

Several years ago when the new church in Knightdale was starting we agreed to send out teams from Good Shepherd to canvas new neighborhoods on behalf of the Church of the Light. There was one problem—only one person showed up that day.

To my knowledge we never sent a team into the community of Knightdale. We let it pass without comment. Looking back that was a mistake. It might have served us well to sit down together and find out about such reticence. Because, after the usual excuses were offered---it's too hot, it's not a convenient time, it's not my job I'm an introvert, what if there are dogs..and so on-- we might have had a holy conversation about our responsibility to bear the light of Christ into this dark and lonely world.

Go Jesus says—and far too often we think that means
Go to Church. Which is a very good thing. But even worship
Ends with the pulsing command: Go in peace and serve the Lord.
It means Go as Jesus' Church
Where we become church is in the constant guiding of the spirit
To connect our compartmentalized worlds.
He sends us to the board room
He sends us to the school room
He sends us to the operating room

Go on your way---the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.

Perhaps there is where we find out what it is to live by faith
And discover the deep and abiding presence of our Lord.
What has our going looked like here? How have we been sent?

Since God in Christ put us on this corner in Northwest Raleigh we've used our location to draw people in. That building and expanding our facilities

would help us reach more people. By and large people have come to us....we haven't gone to them.

If we've been sent out it's been to a youth mission trip like the one to Baltimore or it's to those people who come to the coffee house or it's to those people who come to Our camp for Hispanic children. These are great, great gifts and they can be for us ways we are sent...

How about the simple task of inviting someone else to church. We may not see the casual restaurant conversation about church as being sent—as though a simple invitation to worship might invite you to test Jesus' words about Lambs being eaten by wolves—“Oh no, once I mention church my friend will become the big, bad wolf and that ham sandwich will include my hand!”

According to Thom Rainer in his book *The Unchurched Next Door* 82% of the unchurched if asked are likely to attend church.

Here's the kicker—2% of church members invite an unchurched Person to worship. 2%. If you do the math—with approximately 425 persons in worship per Sunday, 2% represents about 8 persons.

The Harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few!
Currently, 67,000 persons are moving into Wake County Per year. A plentiful harvest. In our service area alone Approximately 70-75% of the community is un-churched.

What's in the way? Why the constipation of the faith?

Someone here when confronted with Jesus' command to go Suggested that before going we would benefit from learning to express our faith here, with each other first.

Grow our confidence about faith sharing first with Each other.

Yes....yes...reach out here first. Use the faith talk cards
In your household
Go to a Via de Cristo or a Teens Encounter Christ
Get involved in a Christ Care Group or a Bible Study

Jesus has only one plan for reaching this hurting world. There is no plan B.
It's the church, it's this church, it's you and me

When Jesus sent the 70 to our knowledge that meant everyone in the
Community. Not just 8 persons!
Back in chapter 9 the Twelve disciples were sent out,
Now it was Mary Madgelene, and Joanna, and Susanna's turn.

We don't find out what it was like for them to be rejected or what it was like
to be welcomed we get their one sentence report:

Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us.

What if you and I tested the meaning of these words?
That we took up residence in people's homes and lived
Close to them. We discerned where they were
Hungry for peace, the peace that gives life, that
Sets free...

And we spoke the peace of Christ to them. That we cared enough to touch
their worries for their children or for their health or for their
Life direction or for their discord with each other and instead of leaving
them alone we risked speaking peace, speaking kingdom come near. Some
demons were caste aside. And we were not pre-occupied with success,
But were content to be numbered among God's people.

What would be more source for joy? That we embodied Jesus
To others or that we stayed in the safety of this room?
I think we know the answer.
HIDE IT UNDER A BUSHEL NO! I'M GOING TO
LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE, LET IT
SHINE

When we come to renew our baptism into Christ
We are renewing our hope of bearing His light.

A woman was once debilitated by breast cancer. It nearly took her life. For a
while it took all her energy, all her focus to just survive from day to day.
But by a miracle she survived. She was given a new start. But she didn't
forget the imprint of that illness and prayerfully decided that through the gift
of her illness she was now to get involved in caring for others with cancer.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.
Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into this
harvest

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals---all that baggage weighs us down.
Focus on the mission
Don't major in the minors. Where are we being nudged
To believe, belong and serve.
Here is the crucible of our faith.

The Gospel happens between people in the nitty, gritty of day to day. It's
been said the incarnation is God's entrance into the personal. Person to
person is the way the good news is communicated.

Person in love with person
Person respecting person
Person forgiving person
Person touching person
Person crying with person
Person hugging person

The primary way you and I share the kingdom of God is by our
Presence.

When Annie Mhaka was sent here to visit Good Shepherd she did not come
expecting to be the lone spokesperson for the Mnene parish. Annie didn't
sign up to be the person up front. In here culture women
Were not out front. And here she was, yes in the company of Christians, but
Now needing among us to be out front. When the Zimbabwean Methodist
pastor
From Durham spoke to Annie it was a profound gift.

He said: The Lord will give you what you need. He will be with you.
Remember that and you will be fine...and she was

Jesus anticipated rejection and dismissal. He prepared us for it.
The message of peace we are to bear is not depreciated by those who refuse
it. The peace of God with which Jesus equips his messengers is resilient.
It has endured war, famine, betrayal, torture.

With the words we are given we can go anywhere. (From the Christian Century, July 1, 2007)

Ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into this harvest...go on your way...

The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, here is the nitty, gritty of faith

Be live between being sent and returning.

Who will go to the 75% if not us. Only 8 would know the joy
Of being sent?

How about the other 417?