

Rev. Dr. Jim Gill

July 7, 2019

“Mission Field”

Isaiah 66:10-14 Psalm 66”1-9 Luke 10:1-11; 16-20 Galatians 6:1-16

Song for Time with Children

Won By One –jim gill

I was Won by One

You were Won by One too

And we’ve all got a job to be done

To be done Won by One.

Cause if every One Won One

And if every One Won Won One.

How many could be Won

If every One Won Won One?

INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 10:1-11;16-20

On his way to Jerusalem for his last Holy Week Jesus is doing a several city tour. His pattern has been to send his 12 disciples into town ahead of him to prepare the way for his coming. In this morning’s passage Jesus expands the scope of his mission by moving from sending the 12 disciples into one town to sending 35 teams of 2 out into 35 towns. Let us stand. The Holy Gospel according to the 10th chapter of Luke.

Mission. Mission Control. Mission Impossible. Mission Field. Mission is so much more than a once a year trip. Mission is an every moment adventure. In reality, we ALL of us are always on mission. In fact, the only time we are not on mission is when we are sitting here in worship. Our goal in worship is to thank God and praise God for trusting us WITH a mission and to receive instructions FOR our mission.

In WWII my father was a radio operator in the Army Air Corp. His mission was communication. My wife’s father was a bomber pilot. His mission was to drop bombs. In a day when the maximum a pilot was asked to fly was 25 missions, Anne’s father flew 50. Our Dad’s knew what their mission was and they did it and returned to go again.

This week we remembered those who put their lives on the line to establish this country as an independent nation. Their mission was to establish independence from England. Most of the founding fathers lost all they had to secure that independence. Some did

not return home safely. Some had no home to which to return. The war that won our freedom from England left many of our founding fathers and mothers.....homeless.

In our gospel passage Jesus challenged those whom he was sending out ahead of him to go door to door as homeless wanderers at the mercy and hospitality of those to whom they came.

Jesus asked his 35 teams of 2 for a total commitment. He doesn't sugarcoat the job. He does not do what folks in the church have sometimes been guilty of to get someone to take a position of leadership. Jesus does not say, "Oh, there's nothing to it. You'll love it! It's just one council meeting a month!" 😊 Or, as of last Sunday me saying, "I know we can pull off a Vacation Bible School in 3 weeks.

Jesus wants his disciples to know what they're getting into. So much so, that in some ways it's a rather bleak picture that he paints for them. Those that do sign up for the job need to know that at times the working conditions will not be good. They will be fraught with danger. "See I am sending you like lambs into the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3b) Just in case you didn't know, wolves eat lambs for breakfast lunch and dinner. 😊

He gives them some advice about how they are to go about it. They are to travel light. These are the same instructions Jesus gave on previous missions when he would send out the 12 disciples. They are not to take anything that could hold them back. They are on an urgent mission.

As we go out to minister in the name of Jesus, we are to do as he instructed. First, we are to travel. Mission involves going FROM somewhere to SOMEWHERE ELSE to do SOMETHING and return.

Secondly to be involved in Mission we are to travel light. Years ago I took a youth group to Summer Camp driving a 15 passenger van named Broomhilda. In the van on the way to the Hill Country Camp I said, get some paper and write this down. Traveling light. Traveling light. Jesus took my burdens so I'm traveling light. And Jesus said I'd be the light of the world. So I'm traveling light and I'm a traveling light.

Third, we are to not get distracted along the way....by greeting folks along the way and getting bogged down in idle with chit chat. When it comes to our mission we can only talk about the weather and the Astros for so long.

Fourth, when we get to where we are going ...we are to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Today people like to "keep their options open, in case something better comes along." Jesus says, "Don't go from house to house trying to see if you can find a better place to stay--like one with a softer bed and more delicious food. Jesus is simply encouraging them to be good house guests. Don't make your host go out of their way for you. Eat what is set before you.

But what if the people do not welcome you? What do you do then? Jesus is just as specific in this case as he was before with those who were more accepting. The bottom line is to preach the gospel to them also whether they will accept it or not. Say the same thing to these people. "God's kingdom is coming." Then if they won't accept you, leave that place, and find one that is more receptive.

Jesus is saying, "Leave the outcome to the judgment of God for their lack of receptivity. If people don't respond to the gospel, move on to those who do. If people, after repeated invitations, refuse to come to church or to return to church, move on to those who are open and receptive to the gospel. The mission is too important to spend time where it is not received. If they won't receive you, shake the dust off your feet and move on. If the territory is overworked, if that market is saturated, for heaven's sake, move on.... for heaven's sake.

An executive hirer, a "head-hunter" who goes out and hires corporation executives for other firms, once shared his methodology. He said, "When I get an executive that I'm trying to hire for someone else, I like to disarm him. I offer him a drink, take my coat off, undo my tie, throw up my feet and talk about baseball, football, family, whatever, until he's all relaxed. Then, when I think I've got him relaxed, I lean over, look him square in the eye and say, "What's your purpose in life?" It's amazing how top executives fall apart at that question.

"Well, I was interviewing this fellow the other day, had him all disarmed, with my feet up on his desk, talking about football. Then I leaned up and said, 'What's your purpose in life, Bob?' And he said, without blinking an eye, 'TO GO TO HEAVEN AND TAKE AS MANY PEOPLE WITH ME AS I CAN.' Now THAT'S a great mission statement.

I believe every Christian has a Message, a Ministry and a Mission. Your Message is your testimony of what God has done and is doing in your life. Your Ministry is what you do IN the church. Your Mission is what you do outside the church IN the world.

We ALL are lambs being sent out to wolf town-- in harm's way. However, when we open ourselves to the power of all prayer, we are enabling ourselves to be available to the presence of the kingdom and the miracles and wonders Jesus brings wherever he goes.

In my doctoral research I discovered that 99% of the church is comprised of people who are not pastors. ☺ You are the 99%. I am part of the the 1%. No, I think you are the 99.99% and I am the .01%. If you expect all of the ministry to be done is to be done b the .01% you are making a "grave clerical error!" ☺

Most any successful person will tell you that persistence in a task is a major factor in success. Success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. Success is suiting up and showing up.

What I find particularly intriguing about the instructions Jesus gives these new missionaries, is that while he gave them a pretty tough briefing session, outlining in detail all that could possibly go wrong and how difficult it was going to be, they STILL WENT!

When they returned, they were ecstatic about what they have been able to accomplish. They have been successful beyond their wildest expectations. When Jesus heard what the 70 had to say, he took it as a sign that God was having his way in the world. Satan was finally getting his due. When the 70 report what they did, Jesus had a vision of Satan falling from heaven.

No sooner has Jesus recognized what they have accomplished and rejoiced with them in their success, than he quickly realizes that now there's a potential new problem and that is--how to handle all this success. What do you do when you are successful? What do you do when the results come in far better than you had anticipated? Jesus knows and he tells them. "Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)

You know what I love about Jesus' assignment? He sent them out to do something every Lutheran loves to do--go to someone's house and eat! He didn't tell them to gather a bunch of people in a stadium, but to go to people's homes and eat what they serve. We can do that. Jesus told his teams to go to people's homes and be courteous guests. We can do that. He told them to listen to folks. We can do that. He told them to share the good news- We CAN DO THAT.

North America was once a Mission Field. Europe sent missionaries to us to help us establish and grow churches. We are still a Mission Field. Korea and Africa are sending missionaries to US!

Unlike my father and father-in-law's missions which brought death and destruction from the skies, our mission is to bring life and life abundantly to the world. Our mission ISN'T so much to go to church or get people to come to church. Our mission is to BE the church wherever we go --to work, to school, to Wal-Mart, to Galveston on Vacation and to Vacation Bible School. The theme of our Vacation Bible School is "To Mars and beyond." On July 20 we will remember 50 years ago when a man set foot on the Moon. We may not make it to the Moon OR Mars....but we can all make it to beyond. Because beyond is just outside our doors. Beyond is our ... Mission Field!

Let's pray. Dear Lord, Thank you for trusting the future of your Family to those disciples. Thank you for continuing to trust the future of your Family to us. May we follow in their steps as we seek to fulfill our Mission. Give us eyes to see others in need. Give us ears to listen to the cries of those around us. Give us lips to share the good news of Jesus with those who will listen. Give us feet to move on and continue sharing if after sharing we find no response. Give us the persistence to not give up. Give us hearts for mission. Here we are...send us...out into the world, with a story to tell.

Halverson Benediction:

You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are God has put you there. God has a purpose in your being there. Christ who indwells you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in God's grace and love and power. Go and Serve the Lord. Amen