

## 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 9:35-,10:20.

Hymns: 347, 326, 221, 564, 281, 332.

### INTROIT: Psalm 100

P Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth!

C **Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with joyful singing!**

P Know that the LORD is God!

C **It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.**

P Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise!

C **Give thanks to Him and bless His name!**

P For the LORD is good. His mercy endures for ever,

All **and His faithfulness through all generations.**

**COLLECT:** Almighty, Eternal God, in the word of Your apostles and prophets, You have proclaimed to us Your saving will. Grant us faith to believe Your promises that we may receive eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### Readings

**Old Testament reading: Exodus 19:2-8**

**Epistle: Romans 5:6-15**

**Gospel: Matthew 9:35-10:20.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon for this morning is written in the book of Matthew 9:35-10:8 which was part of our Gospel reading before.

**35** Then Jesus travelled through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.

**36** When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them, because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then He told His disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. **38** Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest!"

**1** Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out unclean spirits and to heal every disease and every sickness.

**2** These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; **3** Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax-collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; **4** Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

**5** Jesus sent these Twelve out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any city of the Samaritans! **6** Go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel! **7** As you go, preach: 'The kingdom of heaven is near!' **8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and drive out demons! You have received freely: give freely!"

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,

Peace be with you.

We have just heard a depiction of the kind of person Jesus is, one who loves people and enjoys being with and helping them. Matthew wrote about his master, "**Then Jesus travelled through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.**"

Jesus wasn't the kind of person to stay in one place and have the people come to Him. He was out there on the road, travelling from little town to village, always on the move. Our Lord had such a love for God's people that He didn't expect them to travel to Jerusalem. He came to them.

When Jesus got there He had something specifically to do. He taught them. He showed His love for the people by preaching the good news, the Gospel. What is, the gospel? It's the message that God's kingdom has come down to you. As humans we've throughout our history believed that there is a being above us, our maker. In ancient times people were smarter than they are today. They looked around at all the complexity of the natural world, all the beauty and strength of nature, and then they looked at themselves and their failures and they said, "**There must be a God out there! I wonder what he looks like.**"

Well imagine being in our little town of Lowood one day, and as we come to our house of worship here, there's a man there, who tells you everything you ever wanted to know about God. But something's different about this man. He not only tells you about God, He tells you He is God! He says the kingdom of heaven has now come down to you. You look at the preacher and you are staring God in the face. This man preaches to you like you've never heard before, with authority, and everything He says you have an understanding of, because He is the eternal God in the body of a human being. Amazing that's what it must have been like, absolutely amazing for the people who heard Jesus preach.

And Jesus not only preached to the people. He healed them as well. Those who were blind, or crippled, or paralysed: He made them whole. He healed their diseases. He gave them back their abilities. He did this to show them that what He said about Himself was true. He was the Son of God, that is, He was God Himself.

Many people welcomed Jesus into their town. Some offered their homes to Him. Others left their homes to follow Him wherever He went. I think of the little man Zacchaeus, who climbed up a tree to see Jesus, and then welcomed Him as Saviour into his house for supper.

The Gospel of the kingdom is that God has come to our town in Jesus Christ. Right here today Christ is making His appearance. We have gathered in this house of worship this morning, just like those people in ancient times. They gathered to read from the Bible "*the scrolls*," and they were surprised to see God Himself walk in. We shouldn't be surprised to know that Jesus is present here this morning though! Jesus told us that where two or more gathered in His name, He would be there with them. He told his disciples that when they baptized and taught His word, He would be with them always, to the end of the age. He told them, "Whoever hears you, is hearing Me." We can certainly say that Jesus Christ is with us this morning.

When Jesus looked out at the people who gathered around Him, it says He had compassion on them. He loved them. He wanted to help them. But there were so many of them. He said **they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** Jesus could see more than they could. He could see the reason they were troubled and harassed. They had enemies. There was a predator in their town, and he was everywhere, sneaking around, poking and jabbing at them. And the poor people! They couldn't see this invisible enemy. He was working his hardest to discourage them, to wear them down, to drive them to despair. He was the one who brought illness to their bodies. He was the one who put the cloud of despair over their heads. Satan was at work in those towns, and he is working in our towns as well, he's even among us today.

We really have the same enemies today, as you will recall. We have the Devil, who preys upon us. Most people today think Satan is a fairy tale character, but let me tell you, he's alive and kicking. Where do people get the ideas to do the evil things that they do? The thoughts and desires they have. The devil is whispering it in their ear. Jealousy, envy, hatred, lust, adultery, thievery, violence, murder. . . Mistrust. It all comes from the same place, from Satan, the father of lies. Jesus cast the demons out of people, He made them leave.

We have another enemy, the world itself. I don't mean that we should hate the beautiful planet we live on. It's the spirit of the world that attacks us. The trends that drive people is what I am talking about. The world preaches lies to us constantly, through the media, through our experiences, through the lives of other people who live in darkness. When we read the Bible it's easier for us to say this is right and this is wrong. But when we see our friends and neighbours or family doing wrong, we get dragged along too into the devil's trap.

Our third enemy is very close to us. It's our own flesh, those desires that pull us down and seek to drag us away from God. The flesh is the untamed part of ourselves that feels so good when we give in to it, but feels so bad when we realize the wrong we have done. Yes, we have three enemies, the Devil, the world, and our flesh. They won't stop until they thoroughly soil us and damn us away from God's presence.

Jesus breaks through all these enemies and comes to greet us. He has defeated the devil by resisting all temptation. The Bible says that Jesus was tempted and yet was without any sin. That means He did no wrong, and He missed no opportunity to do right. All of this goodness He offered up on the cross, for us. By giving us faith in His sacrifice, He has imputed, or transferred this goodness to us. We are forgiven, and more than this, we are now holy. We shine forth with all the goodness of our Saviour. This is the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

The Bible says Jesus looked out at all the people and loved them. They looked like sheep without a shepherd. There were so many of them and only one of Him, who would die for their sins and give them His holiness. But how would they hear this good news? So He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."

Jesus called his twelve disciples and gave them power to preach, to heal, and to defeat the enemy. He sent Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, the brothers James and John, Matthew and Thomas and all the others. They went out, and for the rest of their lives they travelled and preached and taught until the day they died. That was how Jesus loved His people. He told them to go first to the people of Israel and proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand. They didn't have to take money, for the people they preached to would supply all their needs. If they wouldn't hear and believe, they were to move on. There was to be no charge to hear the good news. It was a free gift to the world.

Friends in Christ, things haven't changed. The gospel of the kingdom of Jesus has come here today, but there's a world of people out there who either haven't heard or haven't considered the possibility that it could be true. Christ has done everything to make it possible for their salvation to be delivered to them. All it takes is for a disciple to go.

I see two ways we can respond to this. We can pray as Jesus said that God would send pastors to every town and village, faithful men who will tell people what sin and death is and what Jesus did to defeat it. We can support ourselves through the seminary affiliation we have through the ULMA where pastors are trained so that they are equipped to preach the gospel to a complex and sinful world.

We can also respond by carrying that message ourselves. Just imagine what those people Jesus healed and taught the Gospel had to say when they got home. "This morning I was blind, but now I can see." "I never thought I would walk on my own two feet, but look at me now!" "This rabbi Jesus told me all my sins are forgiven." Jesus has healed all of our souls. Sometimes He heals our bodies and minds through modern medicine. We have all received the healing of our souls. We have a wonderful message to tell.

Pastor Peter our Vicar Jake and myself are servants of the Word of the Lord, but we will never be able to reach the people that you know who don't yet belong to Jesus. But you can reach them. Pray that God will give you the Spirit to tell the Good News of forgiveness and bring spiritual healing to someone else. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

**3rd Hymn: 221,**

### **Prayer of the Church 2nd Sunday after Pentecost 2017**

**P** Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

*Brief silence*

**P** For the Church, that she would faithfully continue the work of the 12 apostles, and that God would bless her every effort to enlarge His flock, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. We bless Your name. As You have called us out of darkness into Your marvelous light, guard Your Church whom You have purchased with the precious blood of Jesus, our Lord. Keep her in the true faith, without error, schism or compromise until that day when You welcome her home as Your spotless bride. let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Almighty Father, as the Holy Spirit hovered over the face of the deep, You uttered Your Word and the world was created. In the waters of Holy Baptism, You have spoken our names and declared us righteous. You have drawn us to Jesus, the light of life, and saved us. Let His light now shine through us that others may see our good works and give glory to You in heaven. let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P O Eternal Son, You declare that no one can come to You unless the Father draws him, that no one can come to the Father except through You, and that no one can say that You are Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Though the world is offended by this truth, cause us to speak it with clarity, passion and without wavering, that all flesh might hear the only name given under heaven by which we must be saved. let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P O Lord Jesus, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to You. You have commanded us to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching everything that You have commanded. Bless the work offered by all pastors as they carry out their calling. Give zeal to Your Church to reach the nations of the world with Your Gospel. Draw them to Your light, and bring them into Your Church, that they, too, may confess the Holy Trinity as the only true God, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who are sick and suffering, that God would look with compassion upon His servants who are facing mental or physical illness, surgery, pain, loneliness or grief, [*especially \_\_\_\_\_,*] that they may be reminded that they are not facing these things alone and be comforted with the hope of eternal life, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who receive the good gifts of the Lord's Supper, that with repentant hearts they would receive the true body and blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the strengthening of their faith and to the benefit of their neighbour, let us pray to the Lord:

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**4th Hymn; 564**