

Your Share In The Harvest

A Sermon on Luke 10:1-12,16-20

Year C - Pentecost 7

3 - July - 2016

JJ¹

On our computer at home we have a video of our friends' son when he was about 4 years old "vacuuming" our living room floor with a Dust Buster. He loved to vacuum. I asked him if he would always love to vacuum. "Ah-ha," he said. Then I asked if I could show this video to his wife one day. Again, "Ah-ha."

I don't tell this cute story because I feel the need to break the ice, this being only the second time I've preached in 6 weeks, but to make a point. While I don't think this boy feels the same way about vacuuming anymore, being few years older, why did he love to vacuum when he was 4 years old? Isn't because people want to have a share in something when it's appealing? A child wants to vacuum or mow the lawn because it's new to them and carries added responsibility. Quickly, though, it turns from a privilege and honor to a chore.

As we explore this section of God's Word today, we see that much the same can happen when it comes to **OUR SHARE IN THE HARVEST** of the Lord.

Today we follow on the heels of last week's Gospel. Jesus taught about the cost of being one of his disciples. From a human/sinful nature point of view, the

cost of following Jesus can seem like a deal-breaker. Like vacuuming for a little child can turn from an honor to a chore when they have to do it when they'd rather do something else, following Jesus can seem like a chore when we look at it with our sinful hearts rather than through the eyes of faith.

Yet notice that right after Jesus taught about the cost of following him, he sends out 72 of his disciples, two by two, to places he was about to visit. Who were these 72? We can't be certain. But what we do know is that at least 60 of them weren't the 12 Apostles. Perhaps all 72 were followers other than the 12 Apostles. While these 72 were called by Jesus and sent out to do public ministry, it's important for us to remember that the honor and privilege of sharing the gospel doesn't just belong to those we call as public ministers of the gospel. It is a privilege God gives to every believer at their baptism when he makes them his own child.

Today Jesus focuses on called public ministers going out to do the preaching and teaching, but he doesn't stop there. Jesus also teaches you about **YOUR SHARE IN THE HARVEST** as believers. First Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the har-

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

vest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Are these prayers still needed today? You bet! They are always needed, and always will be, but in our church body especially now. Lynn Nelson and I attended our Northern Wisconsin District Convention a couple weeks ago. Part of that convention included numbers of vacancies. Even after our Seminary presented and sent out 36 new pastors into the harvest fields of the Lord, there still remain 65 pastor vacancies. And teacher vacancies are even greater.

As we pray that the Lord send out more workers, it is important for us to realize that God will carry out this request through us! All of our lessons today make this crystal clear. God doesn't just make a pastor, teacher or missionary appear out of thin air. As we make this request we are asking that the Lord would open up our hearts to see what ways we are able to help do this work in his harvest fields.

In the Gospel today, we see Jesus sending his workers out empty handed. He sends them out, trusting that God's people will take care of them. Friends, that's one of the beautiful ways you **share in the harvest**. God invites you to take part in supporting his public servants of the gospel. I have always had joy and thanksgiving for you members of St. John for how ea-

ger you are to **share in the harvest** in this way.

As we ask the Lord to send out more workers, realizing that he is going to accomplish this through his people, it's also important for us to realize that it's not just money we send, but real people, our own people. This means recognizing and nurturing our own children here to whom God has given the gifts for ministry. Pastors and teachers don't just come from the families of pastors and teachers, but they come from families just like your own. You know my own father was a

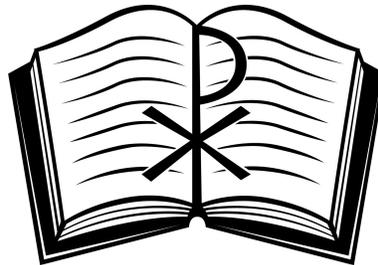
businessman and my mother, while trained to be a teacher and taught for one year, all my days at home she spent in the home raising her children, like you. Friends, how beautiful a way to **share in the harvest** by giving and sharing your own children with Christ's church through the public ministry!

As we each **share in the harvest** in the ways God has called us, we're going to be blessed with seeing some amazing things. As you share God's Word with those in your life, and watch those who serve publicly by your side, you get to see God's Word at work. Yes, you will see and experience rejection and hatred. As Jesus, so us. But you will also see the victories of the gospel as peace floods people's hearts and Satan falling to ruin. You will see the power of God's gospel con-



quering all things, even the power of the enemy!

As God uses you in the harvest field of humanity, and you see such amazing things, even evil spirits submitting to your use and application of God's Word, don't let that be your greatest boast. Instead, as Jesus says, "rejoice that your names are written in heaven." By the grace of God alone, you belong to the harvest that will be gathered into God's barn. By the grace of God alone, there is a home in heaven for you. God has prepared your mansion and your name has been inscribed on that mansion and will remain there for all eternity because your name was written in the blood of Christ your Savior. It cannot be erased. It cannot be scraped off. It cannot be removed.



It is because others who came before you and fulfilled their **share in the harvest** that you too can participate in **YOUR SHARE IN THE HARVEST**. Ever since Adam and Eve, God's people have been laboring in God's harvest fields, both pastor and people, teacher and students, all so that you today would belong to God and have the comfort of knowing that your name is written in heaven. Friends, let this joy be yours as you **share in the**

harvest. Like a little boy vacuuming, may it never be a chore, but an honor and a great source of joy as you work in God's harvest fields, waiting for the day you yourself will be harvested. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

