

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9)

Luke 10:1 – 20

Title

The text for today’s sermon is the Gospel reading appointed for this Sunday, the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God, our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**All who believe and are baptized Shall see the Lord's salvation; Baptized into the death of Christ, They are a new creation. Through Christ's redemption they shall stand  
Among the glorious, heav'nly band Of ev'ry tribe and nation.**

When you go on a family trip, what do you do? How do you prepare? Do you start making lists of where you want to visit? Do you start a list of what clothes you will bring? Do you plan the drive (or flight) first?

When we were growing up, my father would have his suitcase, my mother would have her suitcase, and the five children had their suitcase. Please note, there were three suitcases. Of course, when we were young, the clothes were much smaller. As we grew older, my sister went to college, then my brother, etc. The suitcase didn’t get any larger. The clothes got larger. The number of people got smaller.

If we were going camping, each of us packed the minimum amount of clothing required for the trip. When traveling to Europe with the groups for a tour, the tour company provides a list of items that you may (should) want to bring. Of course, that list is not exhaustive, merely suggestions: like – be sure to bring slacks for when you tour the Vatican (because they have a strict dress code).

These are (were) the packing preparations and restrictions for personal items on our trips. As to how we would travel when growing up, my father would contact AAA and ask them to create a TripTick. A map that you flipped page to page in order to view your trip. The TripTick was prepared by using a highlighter to show the route. AAA would indicate where road construction delays were happening. As a child in that timeframe, this was as best as you could do, there was no GPS. Any map you might bring along wouldn’t show any road construction. Last week we heard that Jesus **set his face to go to Jerusalem.** This week is a continuation of last week’s Gospel text.

Jesus sends the disciples on a trip like no other.

How should they prepare? What should they pack? Decisions, decisions, decisions… that is what we would think. Jesus tells them directly. **1After 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. 2And 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. 3Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.**

Take no provisions with you. You are to place yourselves in the mercy of others. We might ask, where will they stay? What will they do? How will they pay for food? How will they survive? **5Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ 6And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages.**

Remain in the same house. Do not look for “better accommodations” – meaning a nicer place to stay. Stay with those whom you first said **“Peace be to this house!”** The second part of Jesus’ statement is important: **And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.** If you bless someone and they do not believe, or they do not accept your blessing, your blessing will return to you. Jesus doesn’t want them trying to keep score. This person received the blessing, however that person rejected the blessing. We should not worry about the condition of the one receiving the blessing.

This is much like the Sower of the seed. He did not try to cast the seed to only what he deemed to be the fertile soil. He cast seed. The seed may have landed on the path. The seed may have landed in the rocky soil. The seed may have landed in the thorns. The seed, also, landed on the fertile soil and bore fruit, thirty-, sixty-, a hundred-fold.

**Do not go from house to house. 8Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. 9Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10But 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.’ 12I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.**

This is the strongest statement a person can make. I made this statement when I left the US Navy, more specifically when I left California. I made a point to stop at the first car wash I could find in Arizona, in order to get rid of any “California” left on my truck. It was a symbolic gesture, surely no one in California cared. It was for me. It indicated that I left nothing in California and had (have) no plans to return.

**13“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.**

Jesus announces woes to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and to Capernaum. Jewish historian Josephus places Chorazin about two miles from Capernaum. Its appearance in our text, however, shows that it must have been a place of some importance, and highly privileged by the ministry of Jesus. These cities were in Galilee, where Jesus did most of his ministry. Jesus healed many in and around these cities. Yet, with all this evidence, the people still did not believe that Jesus is the Christ. Because of their disbelief, Jesus pronounces woes on them.

What about Tyre and Sidon? Why are they mentioned? Tyre and Sidon were cities that were never captured by King David. The king of Tyre provided many temple furnishings for Solomon’s temple. Tyre and Sidon were pagan cities. Sometimes they would help Israel. Sometimes they would hurt Israel. They are a thorn in the side of Israel.

The Persians conquered Sidon. The Greeks completely destroyed Tyre. The Romans rebuilt both cities and they became prosperous city/states of Rome.

What about today? Jesus continues: **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.”** Even today, when we are out and about town, share Jesus. Sometimes that simple act will be received in the spirit it is offered. Sometimes, that act will be rejected. They are not rejecting you. They are rejecting Jesus. By extension, they are rejecting God.

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

The apostles (the sent ones) returned with fantastic stories about healings and demons being driven out in the name of Jesus. What does Jesus tell them? Do not rejoice in this…. Do not think that this is of your doing. Instead, rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Just as in the parable of the Sower of the seed, cast seed. Do not think that you are responsible for where that seed lands. What are the soil conditions? Are the conditions right for faith to grow. This is not your job. The Holy Spirit prepares the soil. The Holy Spirit provides the nutrients needed for faith to grow? The Holy Spirit is not only at work in the person who hears, it is also at work in the one that casts the seed.

For our journey in life, our packing list is easy. Pack what you may need for the trip, and do not forget God. Pray before the trip. Pray during the trip. Pray once the trip is over. Do not be afraid to share God. God will bless your effort, although you may not be there when that happens.

**With one accord, O God, we pray: Grant us Your Holy Spirit. Help us in our infirmity Through Jesus' blood and merit. Grant us to grow in grace each day  
That by this sacrament we may Eternal life inherit.** Now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.