

## **Sermon for Sunday June 28 2026**

~ Matthew 10:40-42 ~ Pentecost 5

When we drive past a church, we often see signs that say, “All are welcome here.” It’s a beautiful sentiment, isn’t it? It reflects the heart of the Gospel—the radical hospitality of God, who welcomes all people into God’s kingdom.

But as we know, the world we live in doesn’t always reflect that same welcome. Jesus sends His disciples out into a world where not everyone is welcoming, where some may even face danger or rejection.

And yet, in today’s Gospel reading, Jesus offers words of assurance: “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me” (Matthew 10:40). These words remind us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, that we all have a role in God’s mission, and that even the smallest acts of kindness and support matter deeply in the kingdom of God.

Before we dive deeper into the text, let’s take a moment to reflect on the mission and vision of the church. Most congregations have carefully crafted mission and vision statements.

A mission statement focuses on the present—it answers the question, “What do we do, who do we serve, and how do we do it?” It’s like a daily roadmap, guiding our actions and decisions.

A vision statement, on the other hand, focuses on the future—it answers the question, “What do we want to become, and where are we going?” It’s the ultimate destination, the long-term impact we hope to achieve.

In today’s reading, Jesus is giving His disciples both a mission and a vision.

The mission is clear: to go out into the world, proclaim the Good News, and embody the love and power of God.

The vision is equally clear: a community where all are welcome, where even the smallest acts of kindness—like offering a cup of cold water—are recognized and rewarded by God. This vision is not just for the disciples; it's for all of us.

It's a vision of a world transformed by God's love, where everyone has a role to play in the mission.

Let's return to Jesus' words: "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." These are words of assurance. They remind us that when we go out into the world as followers of Christ, we carry His presence with us. We are not alone.

And when others welcome us—whether it's with a kind word, a listening ear, or even a simple act of hospitality—they are welcoming Christ Himself. This is a powerful reminder that the mission of the church is not just about the preachers, the teachers, or the leaders. It's about everyone—those who go, those who welcome, and those who support the mission in countless ways.

In the time of Jesus, there was often disagreement about which traveling preachers had authority in the church. Matthew uses the Old Testament designation of "prophet" to emphasize that those who speak in the name of Jesus bear His authority and embody the power of God.

But Jesus doesn't stop with the prophets. He also speaks of the righteous and the little ones.

The prophets proclaim God's truth and demonstrate His power. The righteous pursue justice and work to heal and restore relationships. And the little ones—the vulnerable, the overlooked—remind us that the mission is wholly dependent on God's power and presence.

Together, these groups represent the diverse roles in God's kingdom. No one is excluded. All are welcome, and all have a role. We are all part of the priesthood of believers.

Jesus goes on to say, “And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward” (Matthew 10:42).

A cup of cold water. It’s such a small, simple act, isn’t it? And yet, Jesus says it matters deeply in the kingdom of God. Why? Because it reflects the heart of God—a heart that sees and values even the smallest acts of kindness and support.

We don’t have to do grand, heroic things (or things we think are grand or heroic) to be part of God’s mission. Sometimes, it’s the small, everyday acts of kindness, like a cup of water, that make the biggest difference.

But there’s another layer to this passage that challenges us. Jesus is building an alternative community—a community that is fundamentally different from the world around it. In this community, dependence on God is crucial.

This, however, is largely runs contrary to modern cultural values, in other words, **it sounds outrageous** in a world that values instead independence, self-sufficiency, and personal achievement.

But Jesus reminds us that the mission is not about human power or success. It’s about God’s power and presence.

Paul writes that we are all born slaves of sin, and that true freedom comes only through baptism—through being transferred from a bondage to sin to a freedom to worship God and serve our neighbour.

This idea of being “enslaved to God” may not be attractive today, but it’s central to the Gospel. It’s a reminder that our lives are not our own. We belong to God, and we are called to live in service to God and to one another.

So, what does this look like in practice? How do we live out the mission and vision of the church in our daily lives?

**First, we recognize that each of us has a role.** Whether we are prophets, righteous ones, or little ones, we are part of God's mission. Whether we are preachers, teachers, supporters, or welcomers, we are part of God's vision. And whether we offer a sermon, a prayer, or a cup of cold water, we are all a part of God's plan.

**Second, we trust in God's power and presence.** We don't have to have all the answers or do everything perfectly. We simply have to be faithful—to show up, to love, to serve, and to trust that God will work through us.

**Finally, we embrace the vision of a community where all are welcome.** This means extending hospitality to others, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable. It means seeing the image of God in every person we encounter.

That said, Jesus does not give us illusory hope, the mission we are called to will not be easy, and sometimes, we will not be welcome. Sometimes, we are bid to simply shake off the dust from our feet and move on.

It means celebrating even the smallest acts of kindness and support that make a big difference in the kingdom of God – here and now, and in the future.

As we go out into the world this week, let us carry Christ's words of assurance with us. Let us remember that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, that we all have a role in God's mission, and that even the smallest acts of kindness matter deeply.

Let us trust in God's power and presence, knowing that God is with us every step of the way. May we be a community where all are, indeed, welcome, where each of us has a role and purpose, and in a world where we get to be part of God's plan – now and in the future. *-Amen.*