

Calling on Others - Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus who is the Christ.

Amen

There was an old farmer, who sat on the steps of his tumble-down shack, chewing on a stem of grass. He was approached by a passing stranger who was searching for a cool drink of water. Wishing to start a conversation and get acquainted with this farmer, the stranger asked, "How are your beans coming in this weather?"

"Don't got none", replied the farmer.

"Didn't you plant any?" asked the frowning stranger.

"Nope," said the farmer, "afraid of weevils."

"Well," asked the newcomer, "how is your corn?"

"Didn't plant none," replied the man, "afraid there wasn't going to be rain.

"Really, what did you plant?" asked the puzzled man.

"Nothing," said the farmer. "I just played it safe!!!"

When a church member was asked by St. Peter as he approached the Pearly gates how many seeds of faith, how many seeds of the gospel did he plant while on earth, he replied, "none, I just played it safe. I was afraid that some would think I was trying to show them I was better than they were. Others knew I wasn't, I didn't want to be called a hypocrite. Besides, St. Peter, I really didn't know all that I should of about faith, Jesus, and salvation to be telling others about it. And come to think of it, isn't that what we pay the Pastor, to do, go out and plant those seeds of faith, to go out and win

souls for Christ. But tell me St. Peter, why, as I look beyond the gates here, I see so few people moving about.

St. Peter replied, "Oh, that is easy, there were so few laborers, so few seeds that were sown, that the harvest was never taken in."

As you can plainly tell this morning, our gospel lesson concerns a subject that we especially in the Lutheran church have not dealt with in a very effect way, the subject of witnessing, the subject of telling others about Jesus Christ. Many of us are like the farmer in our story, who just played it safe. He wasn't willing to risk, he wasn't willing to take a chance, so he had no crop, he had no harvest.

Many of us are in that same boat when it comes to witnessing for Jesus, when it comes to telling others about Christ, we aren't willing to risk, we aren't willing to plant a crop, so then there is no harvest. We are afraid what others might think, we are afraid of our own lack of faith or knowledge. We are afraid we might be called names or made fun of, and further we don't see the task of witnessing as our responsibility, surely it has to be some one else's job, not mine.

Notice in our gospel lesson, that Jesus sends out 70 people to heal, to preach by saying, "the kingdom of God has come near to you". Jesus sent out these 70 because he knew that everyone in the kingdom of God has the responsibility to witness to him. He knew he would be leaving this earth and the only way people would know and hear about his love for them, his sacrifice for them, his grace for them would be for his

disciples to tell others so he sent them out to practice, to get a feeling for what they would be doing when He was gone.

And notice too that Jesus doesn't say it is going to be easy witnessing for him. He tells the disciples that they are like lambs in the midst of the wolves. He tells them what to say when people accept them, and he also tells them what to say and do when people reject them for he knew not everyone was going to accept the good news of the kingdom. But the important point is he wanted the disciples, the 70 to try, to go out among the people and tell them about Jesus.

We are all sinners and need the help of Jesus, but at the same time Jesus is counting on us to tell others about His saving grace in our lives. He wants us to tell others how we have been changed and affected by His grace in our lives. He wants us to share with others, to pass on the good news of the gospel to others.

We have experienced the love of Christ in our lives. God wants us to spread the good news. He wants us to call on others so they may be able to experience the good news of the gospel in their lives.

Are you willing to carry someone else's burden? Not only in the crisis time of their lives, but in the ordinary, everyday experiences of cutting wood for the fire? Are you willing to get involved with someone on a day to day basis being concerned about their life, their faith, their relationship to Jesus?

God wants us to reach out to those who are staggering with the burden of life and give them his grace. And that just might mean that we are to help them carry their burden, to walk besides them in their journey of life.

Are there lonely people who could use of visit? Are there the sick and dying who could use a prayer and a kind word? Are there those in grief trying to go on but are struggling and cannot get past their loss?

The answer is yes to all those questions, and you could be the answer in their lives, You can bring a YES, a voice to their struggles and a measure of God's peace through Jesus to them.

But it takes someone who is willing to risk. Not like the farmer at the beginning of this sermon who was afraid to plant anything for fear it would not grow. No, we need to risk, to get besides someone and help them carry their burden, to give them a measure of God's grace in their lives.

Are you willing to risk, to get yourself dirty for others so that they might have a life that is full and rich, full of God's grace and your care for them? Amen