



Sunday, July 6, 2025
Luke 10:1-11 (Fourth Sunday after Pentecost)

Ascension Lutheran Church
Pastor Tony Acompañado

Many of you know that I love adventure – and the more challenging and wild it is, the more interested I am. However, *my two colleagues*...well, let's just say I'm pretty sure one of them is far more interested in spending time *shopping* for all the cool adventure gear, and the other one – I think he's still trying to figure out what's adventurous and what's pure craziness.

But my shopaholic friend isn't wrong, because adventures do require *stuff*. And it probably shouldn't surprise me any longer that my dear friend who loves to shop isn't always so careful with his packing. Often tossing this and that into a bag in an "I hope I've got everything" strategy. Which typically ends like this, "*Hey do you mind if we stop at Target, because I forgot to bring X, Y, and Z.*"

On the other hand, *I* tend to be someone who meticulously plans and packs for contingencies. So, when it comes to packing, I'm not one to be characterized as a "light packer." And this means lots of planning and organizing but it also means lots of extra stuff...even after scaling back and taking things out as I realize I'll be just fine without them.

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

In today's gospel story Jesus is clear that he wants the 70 to take less, as in nothing – no money, no additional clothes, no anything – just what they happen to be wearing. It seems he wants them to be dependent on the kindness of strangers.

Well, my control issues are a little too strong for that, so I'm guessing if Jesus asked me to do this, I'd probably try to stash some underwear, deodorant, a toothbrush and toothpaste, cell phone charging cord, and a credit card into my pockets hoping he wouldn't notice.

And this mission that Jesus is sending the seventy on – well, this story doesn't do a whole lot to make following Jesus sound all that wonderful – the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Being sent out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Take nothing with you. Not being welcomed. Peace not shared. I don't know about you, but nothing about this sounds amazing or reassuring to me.

But like the gospel story from Luke last week, Jesus is suggesting that we have a tendency to put up all kinds of stipulations before we feel secure enough to go out and share what we know about God and how we've experienced God's love. So, as last week's gospel focused on a list



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of things to *do* before accepting the mission, this week is a list of things *we think we need to have with us* before accepting the mission.

And although the demands Jesus makes may *seem* a bit extreme, they should make us pause and think – and maybe that’s exactly the point Jesus is trying to make – to get us to stop and think about what *we think* we need to have in order for us to trust, follow, and serve Jesus. At the same time, it makes me wonder if Jesus wants us to consider that maybe we’re asking the wrong question. Perhaps the question isn’t so much *what* we need, but rather, *who*.

And I also wonder how we might connect this to things this Fourth of July weekend. Because here in the United States we sometimes see Independence Day as a celebration of not just our independence from Great Britain but also the spirit of American individualism. I think we can all agree that this is clearly playing itself out in our current political era. *Except*, the individualism we celebrate is as much a myth of our culture as is our invulnerability.

The pilgrims and pioneers who settled this land were incredibly aware that their survival depended on each other. The colonies they eventually established, after all, were called “commonwealths,” places where the good of any individual was inextricably linked to the good of the whole.

Which is why I believe that of all the gifts Jesus gives his disciples, some of the most valuable of these may be that of teamwork and trusting obedience.

And this brings me to think of an acronym that most of us would remember, referred to as the KISS principle...a principle advocating for simplicity. Because I often wonder if we make following Jesus much harder than it needs to be. And in some ways, I think it’s hard for us because it’s actually *so* straightforward and easy.

But it truly amazes me how we needlessly complicate following Jesus. And Jesus uncomplicates what we unnecessarily complicate. And because it’s so easy it tends to feel both counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. It’s so easy that it makes us cautious, suspicious, and cynical. *So, what are we supposed to do, Jesus?*

Well, it seems as simple as a children’s game – follow our leader – follow the example of Jesus – Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly. Pray, listen, learn, grow, and love. Break bread, bear burdens, and share peace. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. That’s it.



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But it also might be helpful for us to shift our perspective. Less of an “Impossible Mission” and more of an invitation to stand in wonder at the place of honor and privilege and joy that *we* are being entrusted with this message of God’s love and *we* are being sent out to share the story of what God is up to.

What I find most amazing about today’s gospel is the willingness of those Jesus sends out to be dependent on others. Think about it – no purse, no bag, no sandals, and more importantly, no guarantees about how they’ll be received. All they have is the promise of Jesus to go with them, to do great things through them, and to bring them back home again. And I wonder if that can be enough for us too.

My friends, what if like the 70 others that Jesus sent out, we too would allow our faith in Jesus to guide us and lead us to the places and the people to whom Jesus will reach through us? Perhaps it’s time to trust that God will give us all we need for the mission we’re being sent on, and to just go and do it and leave the results to God. Thanks be to God. Amen!