

Called to Serve
Matthew 9:35-10:1, 10:5-10:14
June 18, 2017 – Second Sunday after Pentecost

Friends, today we celebrate. I've stated on several occasions that one of the reasons I'm a United Methodist is the mission focus of our denomination. We are a mission oriented church; and today we send 11 Youth and 12 Adults to Buffalo, New York to rebuild a neighborhood center. We are going in mission to Buffalo, to help equip the church in Buffalo so they can better be in mission to the people of that community. And it is a gift to be able to serve the Lord in this manner.

How many times have I stated that the Holy Spirit really works in wonderfully strange ways. As I was preparing today's service, imagine my surprise when I opened the lectionary to learn that the prescribed passage for today was the story of Jesus sending out the twelve to minister to the people of Israel. So let's briefly take a look at this passage.

Jesus saw the crowds. They were troubled; they were helpless – like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus told his disciples, "The harvest is big; and the workers are few." Essentially, he says, "As much power as I have, I can't do this job alone." So he tells his followers to plead with God to send out workers on his behalf. That's you; and that's me – workers going out to help with the harvest, workers going out to spread the Good News of God's amazing love, workers going out to help others, so they can further spread the Good News of God's amazing love. Just as Jesus called the twelve so long ago, Jesus has called us. Jesus has asked, "Whom shall I send," and we as individuals and we as the church have responded, "Here I am, send me."

But there's more. . . Jesus tells the twelve, "You don't need to take a lot of extra money with you. You'll be taken care of. You don't need to take a backpack or extra sandals or a walking stick." Essentially, what Jesus is saying is that you don't need to be totally prepared for everything. I'll see to it that you have what you need. Some of you may be feeling that way about our trip to Buffalo – "I'm not sure what I'll be doing. I'm not sure I'll be able to do the work. I'm not sure I'll have either the knowledge or the right tools." But Jesus says, don't worry – you'll have what you need. You'll be taken care of; and you'll be able to do some amazing work in my name.

Finally, Jesus says, "When you go into a house, greet the people there." Bring God's love to the place where you are staying. One translation say to extend "Peace" to the people in the house. If the house is worthy, stay a while, work there, spread the Good News by words and by actions, by hard work. Well, I have good news. . . We already know that place we are going in Buffalo is worthy. Our advance team has checked it out; and they were welcomed with open arms.

But we might, we might over the course of our week meet what I'll call some difficult people. Jesus says, if that happens, don't get into an argument; don't become difficult yourself. Simply shake the dust off your feet and move out.

I stated a few weeks ago, that I believe every Christian has a calling to share the love of God; and today, 11 Youth and 12 Adults have been called to a specific ministry – to go to Buffalo and work on a neighborhood center. This week we will be involved in an amazing ministry, because we will be sharing the love of God, so that others can further share the love of God. I have often noted how the love of God multiplies. If each of us shares the Good News with a few people, and each of them shares the Good News with a few people, and each of them shares the Good News with a few people – it won't take long until the whole world will know the Good News of God's amazing love.

God has called, "Whom shall I send?" And you have responded, "Here I am, send me." Praise be to God for the opportunity to serve, the opportunity to share his love with the people of Buffalo, New York. Amen.

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