

Sermon July 6, 2025

Beloved, occasionally in the life of our church it is necessary to hold one of our own in prayer. Today we hold Jeff and his family in prayer, as he is deployed for active duty in the service of our country. We want to recognize this occasion by surrounding him with our blessing, and we surround his family in prayer as well.

Call Deb and Gordon up

Words of Assurance

Today, we want to assure you of our love and support, and to offer you our blessing. Know that you are never alone. Remember the words of the Psalmist, who said: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Ps. 46:1)." No matter where you go or what you experience, God is with you. Never forget who and whose you are. First and foremost, you are a Christian. You are part of God's family and part of this church family. Be proud of who you are, and do your best to live up to your high calling as a follower of Jesus Christ. And on those occasions when you fall short, be assured that God's love for you never fails. Finally, know that our prayers will accompany you. Though you will be absent from us, we will hold you in our hearts. We will be here for your family. And we will be here for you when you return.

Pledge of Support Pastor (to congregation):

You have heard these words of assurance. Do you, Trinity church family, pledge to support this family with your love and your prayers

People: We pledge our support.

Prayer Shawl:

Presentation Presenter: We want to offer this as a symbol of our prayers and our covenant with you. We hope you will keep it with you as a continual reminder that, wherever you are, you are part of our church family and we care about you.

Prayer of Blessing Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, we ask your blessing upon Jeff and his family. Watch over them, protect them, and assure them of your abiding presence in every situation. Grant Jeff the strength and courage to overcome every trial and temptation. Grant him the peace of knowing that there is nothing that can ever separate him from your love. Amen.

Gods community has come near!

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

After this the Lord appointed seventy 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. See, 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. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.

Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town

and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

"Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Sent Out to Discipleship

Karl Barth

Sixty years ago, the President declared a War on Poverty. A social safety net was woven with the creation of new federal programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, and food stamps, and the expansion of existing programs like Social Security and welfare benefits. The systems created were not perfect, but they did make a fundamental difference in people's lives. The poverty rate dropped from 32% to 12%, where it has essentially stayed for decades.

This week we went from a War on Poverty to a War on the Poor and Vulnerable. The newest law passed guts many of those programs to fund lower taxes for the wealthiest members of our society. We can expect the poverty numbers to rise in the coming years. But we aren't just talking about numbers... we are talking about people's lives. People kicked

off insurance, rural hospitals and nursing homes closing their doors, families losing food benefits. We are talking about who will die.

As we watch people lose insurance... as rural hospitals close... as $\frac{1}{4}$ of all nursing homes shut their doors... everyone will be hurt.

Beloved, this is not a red or blue issue... this is not a right or left issue or a black and white issue. This is a moral issue.

When Jesus began his ministry, he preached from an ancient scripture;

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

This is Christ's mission on earth. And there is no better time for us to hear that mission than today. We are called to do what our country's leadership is failing to do - to care, love, welcome and be a voice for peace and restorative justice.

Today we hear how Jesus expanded his ministry in a time when people needed to hear the Good News more than ever. He chose 70 followers and sent them out to continue God's work. As he sends them out, but he warns them that their ministry will not be easy: "I am sending you out as lambs among wolves," he says. Even the biggest animal lover knows that's dangerous and scary, filled with those who mean us harm... who do not understand the commitment and love needed to build up a Beloved

Community that operates differently than any other community ever has.

Who have never felt God's sacred presence here on earth.

Some people will listen and follow - but most will laugh at you, threaten you, make your life difficult. But he did not send them out alone. He sent them out in pairs, two by two. He sent them out with support. He sent them out, knowing that two are stronger than one and that the Beloved Community... the Kingdom of God is built on relationships.

Siblings, we hear today that Jesus sends out seventy as workers for the harvest... Jesus sends them to proclaim that God's the Beloved Community... the Kingdom... is being built before our eyes. Jesus sends out seventy men and women and gives them authority over every spirit and every condition that oppresses God's children. Jesus sends them out, knowing that they will face dangers and temptations.

Jesus sends them out!

Jesus tells them to go empty-handed. These disciples are to carry no money or swords to display power, no food or supplies, no sandals for their feet. They must leave all of the comforts and necessities at home, and never look back. The seventy are armed only with the message that the Kingdom has come. They are to speak these words to those who offer them hospitality and to those who do not. They are to be ambassadors for Christ; they are to live into God's vision for the world. They are to practice peace, do justice, live the faith. After seeing what they had seen, after witnessing so much pain and so many miraculous moments,

these followers were sent out to be doers of the word, to be kingdom carriers.

Siblings, now we are sent out too. *We are building the Beloved Community - right here and right now.*

As our social safety net is shredded, Jesus sends us out to scoop people up in another kind of net. Jesus sends us out to share the peace of Christ and the good news of God's presence on earth. To share the good news that the Beloved Community...God's Kingdom is breaking forth right before our eyes. To reach out to the most vulnerable people in our society who are being pushed farther into the margins and bring them back into the centers of our community.

Jesus is asking us to continue the message he began 2000 years ago... to claim Christ's mission on earth as our own. We are the Body of Christ. Christ's mission is the mission we are called to embrace, just as we are embraced in Christ's body.

And we are not alone, on this mission that takes us into the den of wolves and darkest valleys. We travel together. Just as the seventy went 2 by 2, we go in twos and threes... we go as a community.

And we go in the company of the Spirit; that same Spirit that Jesus proclaimed thousands of years ago. We go, knowing that we are anointed and blessed and that the Spirit will be with us when we face friends or wolves. We are sent out, but we are never alone.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you, because God has anointed you to bring Good News to the poor... to the oppressed... to the frightened... to anyone who is in need of God's holy presence in their lives.

The Spirit covers us, everywhere we go. The Spirit has been poured out -- not just on the Twelve, not just on seventy, but on the whole of God's people.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you, because God has anointed YOU to bring Good News to the poor. And nothing is impossible with God's Spirit.

Thanks be to God!