

Sermon Luke 10 1 20 7th S af Pent S C

Sermon: 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Luke 10:1-20 (vv.1,8)

Theme: The proclamation of the Kingdom of God

Goal: If people listen or not, the Kingdom of God has to be proclaimed. God gives a chance to all to know about the salvation He prepared in Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: When we pray in the Lord's Prayer *Thy Kingdom come*, usually people think of heaven. It's not wrong; but the "Kingdom of God" has a much broader sense than just heaven. Martin Luther explained in the Small Catechism: *God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His Holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.* It's a matter of faith and life that begins here and goes into heaven. We are citizens of God's Kingdom right now by faith in Jesus and we have our citizenship guaranteed in heaven!

A commentary wrote: *God did not save us from afar, but He sent His only begotten Son to breathe the poisoned air of this world to rescue people. He did not save us by bringing us out of this world, but by promulgating a Kingdom which exists in this world right now, a kingdom of faith and hope. That kingdom was evidenced as present in every leper cleansed, demoniac freed, blind man seeing, and dead man walking during Jesus' ministry. It continues to be seen in every poor man fed, every sin forgiven, every hospital with a cross on it, and every time an otherwise forgotten woman in a nursing looks and smiles at her pastor walking through the door... God is very concerned about today... Christian preaching proclaims a kingdom come as well as a kingdom coming. It is now, and not yet*

(Phil Brandt, pp.2,3,4). The Kingdom of God is here and there, not just at one

place. Wherever God's Word is proclaimed and people come together to listen to it and believe, there is the Kingdom of God – as we are gathered this morning as His people in His house.

I – Those who receive the Kingdom

Jesus had prepared and nurtured not only the twelve Disciples, but also many others, as we hear in our Gospel. 72 were sent by Jesus, two by two, to go ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. Like ambassadors preparing the way for the King, they were sent ahead of Jesus to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God – Jesus Himself. They received power to heal sick people and to drive out demons; but their main task was to tell the people “The Kingdom of God is near you”. In the Jewish believers' mind this meant: The Messiah has come to establish His Kingdom! And many people believed and were helped in their distresses. This helps to understand how huge multitudes gathered when Jesus approach a village and began to preach and to heal. People were expecting the King as the 72 had announced, and many welcomed Him.

II – Those who didn't receive the Kingdom

But many didn't welcome Him. Even the cities of Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, where the headquarter of Jesus was, didn't believe in Him and received a strong warning and condemnation from Jesus lips. If in some places the disciples wouldn't be welcomed, they had to be honest with them about the choice they were making; but even so they had to proclaim: “Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.” They would have no excuse of not knowing about God's eternal plan to save them. They had the chance and they rejected it!

The kingdom of God has to be proclaimed anyway, no matter if people accept it or not. God doesn't want to be ignored by anyone. The Epistle to the Galatians says: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked" (Galatians 6:7).

III – Jesus still sends His messengers

God really cares about every person. He doesn't ignore anyone, but He wants to save all. The investment He made to save humankind was huge: The life of His own and only Son. He doesn't want to lose profits; this means: people. Everyone is precious to Him. He still sends messengers ahead of the coming of His Son when he comes again in glory and great power on the Last Day. His concern is shown in the prayer He asks for more workers in His Kingdom: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." In some families, in the past, it was a good tradition that one of the sons had to study as pastor and was sent to the Seminar. How many families have this project for one of their children nowadays? God is looking for ambassadors of His Kingdom and He asks us to pray for this.

We and most of the western world are living in a very comfortable situation in what concerns to church matters. We have good facilities, a pastor, religious freedom... Even for the pastors it is a comfortable position, with lots of guarantees that the first disciples sent by Jesus didn't have. Maybe this is the reason why so many are lukewarm and are not concerned about the growth of God's Kingdom...? We have to examine ourselves about our faith and our commitment to God's Kingdom. God gives us all the conditions to do His work and to help others to be saved by Jesus' grace. What are we doing? *We have been saved purposefully, because Jesus wants us to be a witness to His work* (Phil Brandt, p. 43).

IV – God has our names written in His book of life

The disciples came back excited! “Even the demons submit to us in your name!” they reported to Jesus! “He replied: ... Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Jesus lifts our eyes up from the challenges and problems of His kingdom on earth to His Kingdom in heaven, where our hope rests. *My body, my life, my physical being this side of the grave, which is also on earth, is of course within the reach of Satan and of temptations. But my name is safely in the book of life out of his reach. Like some great dog on a chain, there are things Satan can reach today – my body, my money, my family, my home; but there is something that is out of reach – my name written in the book of life... Jesus really wants us to realize that our names are written in heaven where Satan cannot touch them. There is a safe place for us... our names are given in baptism and written in the book of life. This is the enduring legacy of Baptism and that’s why it is so important to us Christians* (Phil Brandt p. 35,34).

Conclusion: Today as we preach and witness, we proclaim the Kingdom of God in this world. Through Word and Sacrament, Jesus is present, the rescuer has come. That does not mean the problems go away, but it changes the way that we react to them and the solutions that we present to them... That is what it means to take that body and blood of Jesus inside ourselves in worship. He will go with us out through these doors into a world which desperately needs him. Through me, He will act. The victory is ultimately won but we strive to the goodness that God has set before us because that is the goal of our faith. It is not just tomorrow, it is today. (Phil Brandt, pp.5,6). Amen.

