**Luke 10:1-20**

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. 2 And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. 9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. 13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. 16 “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” 17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” 18 And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

**“Freedom Sent From Christ For You”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Celebrating our nation’s freedom is to commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. However, it is interesting to read these words about those at the time of our nation’s independence. “Although the *act* of declaring independence was considered important, the *text* announcing that act attracted little attention.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The text is what we hold sacred today, but the need to declare independence is at the heart of what made America great.

Accept this need to declare freedom never ends, especially in the religious sense today. Just the day after the Supreme Court ruled against abortion laws in Texas, another case they rejected about a family owned grocery store refusing to stock the morning after pill. As Justice Alito wrote in his dissent, “At issue are Washington State regulations that are likely to make a pharmacist unemployable if he or she objects on religious grounds to dispensing certain prescription medications. . .  If this is a sign of how religious liberty claims will be treated in the years ahead, those who value religious freedom have cause for great concern.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Where earthly freedom is faltering, Jesus remains faithful to declare good news. **The Word of Christ is peace flowing out with liberty that is the love of God for sinners.**

1. **Christ sends out His greeting of peace that comes as a high priority.**

* The appointing of 72 disciples was for a short mission trip.
* This was not something new. Jesus praised John the Baptizer for, “Preparing His way.” The twelve He sent out to villages, “preaching the Gospel and healing everywhere” (9:6).
* Sending out “72” only was broadening the scope of outreach.
* The harvest was plentiful, but there would never be enough hands.
* There was also plenty to fear for Jesus said, “…behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.”
* The Lord continues to send out messengers of peace.
* This is nothing new. The greeting of good news had to come to us. Our Lutheran Fathers state, “For even those who believe before being baptized, or become believing in Baptism, believe through the outward Word, which came first” (SA VIII 7-8)
* The Gospel is that living Word that goes with and belongs to all Christians.
* Pastors preach it publicly, just as God calls all Christians to confess it to their neighbor.
* Whatever shortfall among workers in the harvest, Jesus tells us to pray. Likewise, fear over being lambs before wolves is to listen to what Jesus says, “I am sending you.”

1. **The peace Christ offers seeks to make a place in the lives of people**.

* This is the good news God has given as a promise in His Son.
* “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’”
* The first thing at Jesus birth were angels declaring to shepherds, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (2:14).
* On the first day of His resurrection Jesus said to fearful disciples hiding behind locked doors, “Peace be with you.”
* Those that received this peace first also found healing from sickness and to know who’s presence greeted them for, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”
* Yet, many do not receive this good news from God in their life.
* Rejecting the greeting of peace is actually about rejecting forgiveness and finally it is about rejecting any need for Jesus.
* Problems in life are not the problem, but it is to face the real problem. You have not loved God perfectly nor your neighbor as yourself.
* Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had the blessing of Jesus teaching and doing miracles among them, but were worse off than Sodom!?!?
* This warning of indifference or even rejection to repent still hears, “Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.”

1. **The kingdom of Christ is peace that keeps drawing near to sinners.**

* The 72 returned with a witness that only had room to celebrate Jesus.
* It was in His name the demons fled in fear from them.
* Their work of mercy and forgiveness declared freedom from the greatest tyranny for Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”
* Strength in numbers was not the trick for the truth rested in the single authority that came from Jesus. “Behold, I have given you…”
* Rather than worry about the work, the Lord of the harvest drew near to them saying, “…rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”
* Returning to Jesus is now for us to return to the Divine Service that bears witness of Him.
* By His Name, death and sin that feels so close meet the greater promise of a new creation in baptism.
* His work remains with mercy and forgiveness able to pull down the devil’s advancement of tyranny over sinners.
* Strength is to confess only one glorious authority saying like St. Paul, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ…”
* By Word and Sacrament, we receive more than His messengers, but Jesus brings joyful encouragement against our fears, anxiety, and burdens.

More than a piece of paper, the act of declaring independence set our nation apart to be free. So too, the Gospel is a living active Word working independently above all nations declaring forgiveness in Jesus. The harvest is plentiful, but we cannot choose what it will be. That rests with the Lord of the harvest as He wields the power of His Gospel. Our mission is to freely to declare this good news in truth and love for others. Luther reminds us, “It would be insufferable for someone to associate with people and not reveal what is useful for the salvation of their souls” (The Church Comes From All Nations 16). What you hear today is not silence, but Jesus who gives you a reason to rejoice. The Word of Christ is peace flowing out with liberty that is the love of God for sinners. Amen. The peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://thefederalist.com/2016/06/28/justice-alito-just-sounded-the-alarm-on-religious-liberty/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)