

## Sermon for 2013-07-07

1. Prayer – Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)
2. Opening – A few weeks ago, got together with some of Craig's friends from high school. Very nice people, big garden, flock of free-range chickens, and two pet turkeys Bob and Bob. In addition to Bob and Bob, met their son and his girlfriend, who just graduated from high school. Church since 12. Learned a lot about Christmas and Easter but really wants to learn how to live.
3. Considered today's readings. What do they have to do with how to live? 70 guys with no money, no luggage, and no shoes who go from town to town expelling demons. How is this relevant in 2013 Norristown?
4. Relevant because it shows God's intention
  - a. Jesus sends 70 out. In every town that welcomes you: ?
    - 1) Cure the sick / heal people
    - 2) Tell them K of God has come near
    - 3) The K of God. What does Jesus mean by that? Bible has a lot to say about the K, but what I thought three passages might especially help us:
      - i. Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Jesus in Luke 12:32)
  - b. Just how far does God's K idea go? Who is included?
    - 1) Jesus sends 70 disciples – In the Bible, both 7 and 10 are associated with fullness / completion / perfection, so 7 x 10 must be extra special
    - 2) 70 has its own tradition. Remember Noah? Genesis 10 lists Noah's grandsons, of which there were 70, and each one became the founder of a nation and language.
    - 3) So Jesus symbolically sent enough disciples to cover every nation
    - 4) And Jesus tells them to pray for more help, more laborers for the harvest
    - 5) Who are today's laborers in the harvest? We are.
- ii. Isaiah 66 – The people had suffered a major blow, but God promises consolation, prosperity, good health, delight
- iii. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17)
  - a. Righteousness = right / healthy relationship with God
- iv. So K of God is not physical, and yet Isaiah and Jesus link it very closely with a way of living – restores health and prosperity

5. Relevant because it contains a warning
  - a. God's intention is for the K to include everyone. But making that happen won't be all smooth sailing
  - b. For the K to come in, the demons have to go out
  - c. We can translate demons as barriers, obstacles, opponents of the Kingdom
  - d. What DY see as modern-day demons?
    - 1) Greed, apathy, despair, shame, feeling worthless, insecurity, bitterness, anxiety, pride, arrogance, prejudice
  - e. Warning – like sheep among wolves – the demons are going to resist
  
6. Relevant because it gives us 4 pointers / tips for how to bring in the Kingdom
  - a. Travel light – No purse, no bag, no shoes
    - 1) I am a fan of shoes. Dig garden in sneakers hurts. Work boots much better
    - 2) Nothing wrong with shoes, money, talents, any kind of resource – as long as we remember not to place too much confidence in them
    - 3) They are gifts we can use, but God is the source
    - 4) Rely on God, not on yourself or your stuff
  
  - b. Start with peace
    - 1) Lack of peace will interfere with your ability to bring the Kingdom. Your spirit needs to stay connected to God, and agitation is like static disrupting the signal.

- 2) Peaceful home
  - i. How do we treat the people we live with?
  - ii. Say please and thank you
  - iii. Change habits that really bug your family. E.g. Where do you want to sit?
  - iv. Don't stay angry; learn healthy ways to resolve conflict
  
- 3) Peaceful church
  - i. Reason why Galatians says to "work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith"
  - ii. No strife, no grudges; of course there will be conflicts, but they need to be confronted and resolved in healthy ways
  
- c. Wipe your feet
  - 1) If they won't let you help them, wipe off their dust
  - 2) Like little league – shake it off. For a 300 batting average, you will be out 7 out of 10 times
  - 3) Won't always be successful.
    - i. The person has to want your help
    - ii. Sometimes God has a multi-step plan to help a person, so we won't see the final result

d. Don't get full of yourself

- 1) Wipe off the dust because if you don't, then failure can lead to despair
- 2) Also a risk in success – can lead to arrogance
- 3) Dangers of pride
- 4) A fruit of Spirit is gentleness aka humility
- 5) Boast in the cross
- 6) Rejoice that your names are written in heaven
- 7) Translation:
  - i. What makes me amazingly special is not all the stuff I do.
  - ii. What makes me amazingly special is that God loves me.
  - iii. Am I more special than you are? No. God loves you just as much.

7. Wrap up

- a. So, back to that young lady I met who wanted to know how to live
- b. Each of us will be sent somewhere different this week. We each have our unique roles and responsibilities. We each have our different relationships.
- c. And we each have choices to make about how to treat people
- d. Jesus invites us to live as His modern-day disciples and as we interact with other people to ask ourselves
  - 1) What can I do for this person?
  - 2) How can I help to heal this person?
  - 3) How can I help this person to experience the K of God?
- e. The disciples tried it. And they came back sounding a little surprised that it worked.
- f. Jesus was not surprised. "I have given you authority to tread on snakes, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy..."
- g. In other words, we already have the power to overcome all those demons we mentioned earlier, and to live a Kingdom life of healing, peace and joy.
- h. Pray – Thank you, Lord, for giving us Kingdom power. As we go about our lives this week, show us how to treat everyone we meet. Teach us how to rely on You, maintain peaceful homes, shake off our failures, and humbly rejoice in Your love. Make us healers in Your world. Amen.