

Sermon: Why White Lick?
Luke 10:1-11

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Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'

Sermon

Many years ago, Bill Hybel's - the pastor of Willow Creek, shared his vision of the local church to a summit of church leaders. He talked about growing up and his sense of the local church as being hopeless. "I wanted to deter people from coming to church so that it wouldn't do any more harm to the reputation of Christ. Then, in seminary, I learned about how God worked in the early church and I turned from hopeless to hopeful. And then in ministry I found being hopeful to seeing the local church as the hope of the world, entrusted with God's message of salvation that has the power to change lives and hearts."

I remember that message well, but over the years I have moved to a slightly different understanding of the local church. I believe that the triune God is the hope of the world, the triune God is doing the saving, reconciling, redeeming. But we, the local church, are called to witness and get caught up in what God is doing in our lives, in our community, and in the world. We are called to point to God's amazing work and live a life of gratitude in discipleship.

So why are you here? Why did you come to this *church in the wildwood*? Maybe you got lost one day, or found yourself taking a road you normally wouldn't take and found yourself driving past this little country church, wondering what it was like inside. Maybe you had a friend or family member who mentioned us to you and you thought you would check us out. Maybe you are looking for a presbyterian church near by and you found us online. There are lots of ways people find us for the first time, but why have many of you made this church a home?

For some, it is because of the smaller size. We seek to be a relational church, one where everyone can be known and cared for, where you aren't a face in the crowd or a warm body in the pews. We know one another and by knowing one another we also care, and by knowing and caring for one another we become family. We are also traditional and yet open to new ways of worshiping. We call people to grow in their faith through many different types of learning opportunities and we call people to serve through many different types of outreach and service.

Our text from Luke may be considered the first church community, called by Christ, to witness to God's amazing work. I believe this first community has a lot to tell us about who we are called to be as well. Jesus calls together 72, not hundreds, not thousands, but 72. And he begins asking them to pray: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go!"

And when they go, what does Jesus ask them to do? "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.'" This first community of believers are reminded of what they bring with them when they go. Not money or fine clothing, but peace and that peace is more precious than any other gift they can bring.

When the community arrives in a town, Jesus instructs them to accept the hospitality of the town. Sit down with one another around tables and eat and talk and grow in relationships. And Jesus tells them, heal the sick that you find - an act of compassion and love. Finally Jesus tells them the message to share, "The kingdom of God has drawn near." He tells the community of believers to share this message with those who welcome them, but to tell the same message to those who are less welcoming. "The kingdom of God has drawn near."

You go nowhere by accident. 2000 years later, we pray that we may be sent, we go out wanting to share peace. We welcome opportunities to sit at table with one another, we seek to heal and not hurt. We live into the kingdom of God that has drawn near, for all people, everywhere. "You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God has put you there. God has a purpose in your being there. Christ who indwells you has something He wants to do through you, where you are. Believe this and go in His Spirit's grace and love and power. "When you hear the words that send us out each Sunday, remember who we are and be glad to be a part of White Lick as a worker in God's harvest. Share peace and grow in hospitality. Share healing and a message of hope. Go! for the Lord of the harvest continues to call us into his field.