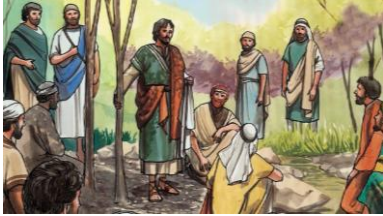


Gospel lesson

We continue reading from where we left off last week about Jesus on His countryside ministry.



picture from
<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-075-resurrection-prophecies/>; Good News Productions
International and College Press Publishing

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

(NRSV)

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.

⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!'

⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you;

⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

¹¹ '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.'

¹⁶ "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

¹⁷ The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!"

¹⁸ He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

<Hymn “Sent Out in Jesus' Name”

TFWS #2184>

Message: A New Creation Is Everything!*picture modified from*

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/dear-children-of-god-omg/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Holy Lord, fount of all blessings and grace,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may live into the new creation

You have made possible for us. Amen.

“A New Creation is Everything!” in Paul's text this week:

““One last thing!” That's what I imagine Paul saying as he was finishing his letter to the Galatians.

“I can't forget this one last thing! Oh, and I need to make it big: SO THEN, WHENEVER WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY, LET US WORK FOR THE GOOD OF ALL AND ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE OF THE FAMILY OF FAITH.””



picture from personal creation

What was big in the news this week?

<Let them respond; get mention of Trump's bill>

What do you make of it? <Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus would have said about it?

<Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus would have us do in light of it? <Let them respond>

I do not think anyone immediately died simply because a bill was passed, but I do think life will get tougher in a couple of years for many people who already are struggling. My question then becomes, how do we help those who are at risk? <Let them respond>



pictures from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/elisha-naaman/>;
credit: Sweet Publishing / FreeBibleimages.org

Big, powerful Commander Naaman had an apparently unsolvable problem, leprosy. The captive servant of Naaman's wife, politically a nobody, did not think she could help, but shared her faith anyway about how God could cure Naaman. Her faith triggered events.

When Naaman sought help from Elisha, did he come humbly? No – kings were involved, with political ramifications; he also brought lots of money and garments, as though to buy healing from God. To Naaman, faith was transactional and the cost of God's favor was to be negotiated.

Elisha, prophet of God, blew Naaman's presuppositions out of the water. Without even letting Naaman in, Elisha refused the payment and told him to simply wash in the Jordan, likely the nearest river.

Well that was not what Naaman expected, so he got all bent out of shape until another political nobody, a servant, pointed out how irrational Naaman was being. So Naaman washed seven times and was healed, like a new creation as he found faith in the God of Israel.

If the faithful girl had not spoken up, how would God have turned the bad situation into something good? If we do not speak up about or take action to do what Jesus taught, how will God turn bad situations in our country into something good?



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-feeding-4000/>;
courtesy of Lumo Project Films
- www.lumoproject.com

The seventy went out in pairs with no extra things to do as Jesus said, and God's power was manifest abundantly. If you want to see God's power at work, you must follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It is tempting to get angry and militant against those who are sinning, to force them to do as we want, but Jesus did not say to force anyone, only to offer peace, love, and healing. Note that we are not to dwell with those who reject God's love, but to move on, taking nothing from them - but leaving them with a statement about what they have missed.

Our real work comes where people are open to

receiving God. Where those opportunities come up, as Paul wrote, “let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”

As always, seek God first. Start with prayer, that you may be created anew by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus. Do you begin each day in prayer, conversing with God?



picture from personal creation

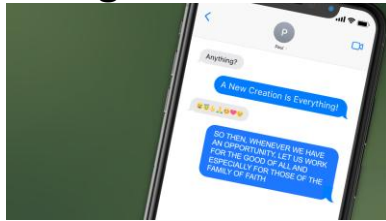
Then go share God’s love. The world is full of people hurting people; be counter-cultural from that. As John Wesley said, “Do no harm; do good; and attend upon the ordinances of God” – in other words, do what Jesus said to do, that you can be an agent of the Holy Spirit for healing the world.

Do not worry that you may not be enough or that you do not do things exactly as someone else does. God will use you better than you may ever know, for our Creator renews the earth in a multitude of ways.

It is not about being a member of a church but about following Jesus. Too often we fall into the trap of putting the human organization ahead of God, whether it be denomination, political party, sports team, or any other group. Work with them only as long as you bear fruit of the Spirit in doing so.

If you cannot work for the good of all (especially for those who live as Jesus taught), then shake the dust off your shoes at the group and move on, telling

them that they are missing an opportunity for better life through the love of Christ.



picture modified from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/dear-children-of-god-omg/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Jesus calls us to new life in the Lord, to love God and one another, and to proclaim the kingdom of heaven for all to seek. Let us continually choose to serve our God as new creations in the Holy Spirit.