

July 3 2016

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 66:1-9 Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Sermon Be Joyful

The first thing that came to mind after I read the gospel lesson in Luke that Nancy read for us today was the seven dwarfs in the story of Snow White. If you remember they went off to work each morning, singing and whistling; “Heigh Ho, Heigh Ho, It’s off to work we go”, joyful in their anticipation of the day ahead working in the mines.

It was likely the same for the seventy that Jesus sent off to spread the word of God, proclaiming that the kingdom of God has come near. They were joyful in their anticipation of their task and the day ahead.

Most of us are retired now and don’t have to think about the day ahead at work. No more alarm clocks, fighting traffic, etc. But think back to those days when you did work, did you face the day with joyful anticipation or did you groan and sigh and wish you could just stay home? Most likely it would be like George and I talked about. At first, we were like the seventy or the dwarfs, we were joyful in our anticipation of the tasks and the day ahead but then came the time when we weren’t so joyful. What if your work was like the seventy and you were charged with the task to spread the word of God? Would you be joyful or would you drag your feet? Well, as Christians, our answer should be that we would approach the task in joyful anticipation. What better thing to do than to spread the word of God and all that he gives to us. We should be whistling every day! We should move boldly into our everyday world, with courage and commitment in telling others about Christ, ministering to all in need, and sharing with them what we have.

Of course, their task wasn’t that simple either. Jesus tells the seventy to travel lightly; no purse, no bag, and no sandals. Can you imagine doing that? My purse has a pharmacy in it besides my smart phone, a notepad, my sunglasses, well you get the picture. I can’t imagine going anywhere without shoes of some sort on, my feet don’t like to walk anywhere besides in the house without shoes. What was Jesus telling the seventy when he said this or to us as we face the day? I think two things; first we tend to be dependent on all the materialistic amenities of our life. Could you go for a day without all those things? It could be a challenge. But if we didn’t have all those things, think how uncluttered our day could be and if we are uncluttered we are better able to spread the word of God, helping those we meet that need God in their lives. Second, I think it also has to do with having faith. The seventy needed and we need to have the faith that as the day goes on; all our needs will be provided for by God. The seventy were guided to enter a town and if they

were welcomed then they were to eat what was set before them. Their needs were provided because they were doing the work of God. If we are spreading the word of God by our words and actions, our needs will be provided for also, especially our spiritual needs. If nothing else, it is the good feeling you get when you help someone, are kind to people and treat them with respect. We need to remember we don't know where they are in life's journey and we are not the ones to judge.

If the seventy came into a town and weren't welcomed they were still to say, the kingdom of God has come near you. Then they were to leave. At least the people of the town knew about the presence of God even if they weren't welcoming.

We can do the same. Even if we are not welcomed because we are Christians, we can by our words and actions show that God is present. Plant that seed.

The day, so to speak, was done and the seventy came back to Jesus with joy saying "Lord in your name even the demons submit to us." Their tasks were completed and they were able to see the fruits of their labor. The dwarfs whistled and sang on their way home from the mines, a good day's work was done.

Back to us and our working days, were you whistling on the way home because you felt good about the tasks that you completed during the day or because you were just able to get out of there and go home?

Again, George and I would say it was because of the work we accomplished during the day to start with and then just to be able to go home towards the end.

But if we were part of the seventy I would hope that we were whistling on the way home because we felt good about the tasks that we accomplished during the day. We were able to tell and/or show that the presence of God came near to the people we met during the day.

So as we go from this place today, please remember these words:

Go forth from this place refreshed and empowered to do the ministry to which God calls you:

Travel lightly, for you carry within you all that you need.

Notice God's presence in simple, everyday experiences.

Whenever opportunity arises, labor for the good of all.

Be joyful in all that you do.

Whistle in the morning and whistle at the end of day.

May the blessing and joy of God, our Creator, Healer, and Life-Giver go with you today and always. Amen.