

Grace Lutheran Community, 2 July 2023:  
Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

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The sermon text for today is based on the text  
Matthew Chapter 10 verses 40 to 42

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Why are you here? What is the reason you come to worship?

Our service used to be known as the Divine Service in the early years. You may remember your pastor saying next week God willing Divine Service will be at 8:30am.

This of course was not just a politically correct or polite way of inviting you all to worship next week but to remind us that in the name 'Divine Service' we were able to get a better understanding of what actually happens while you sit on the pews for an hour or so each week.

Yes the Divine, God Himself comes to serve you. He comes to heal and renew, restore and recreate you through His Holy word.

So why are you here? You are here then, gathered by the Holy Spirit into a community of believers who come to be served by God who is present with us. Heaven meets earth right here in worship. God comes to us, not us going to God.

Here in worship we get to ask for all the things we need and we receive all that our loving Father offers us in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. We are fed and nourished by our Lord God and we unload all that burdens us. We are sent out then into the world to share and live the good news of Jesus. Or in others words to live Jesus in our everyday lives and it is Jesus who goes with us,

leading, guiding and strengthening us as we participate in His redemptive work in the world.

This has been the focus for the past three weeks of gospel readings, how we as disciples are to be and what to expect.

When it came to the Celtic Christians they celebrated and lived God's church, the body of Christ in mission.

We talk a lot about mission in our church, some mission is far off and in the past we have celebrated this with mission festivals or services. But we have also become more and more aware of our local mission field. So what does mission or better put what does participating in God's mission to the world look like for you, for our grace community here, for us in the wider community?

So we know why we are here, called and gathered to come to worship today. To meet together as the body of Jesus Christ and to fellowship by the Holy Spirit where we are united by God's love knowing we are all forgiven children of God by faith.

So then we know why we are here but why do we exist as a faith community here on the peninsula? Do we exist for ourselves, to serve ourselves as church or do we exist for the people out there?

We exist for the people out there. We don't exist simply so we can meet together for our own benefit. Yes you and I benefit from being here in worship – as I have said already we are served, ministered to by God Himself but not for our selfish purposes. No we exist and meet here to be renewed and strengthened to serve each other here but especially to serve those people out there.

Remember Jesus said to His disciples the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers, really what Jesus says to us today is ask me to send out you and me into your everyday life to live by faith and share my love with all you come into contact with.

Then in our text last week Jesus reminded us of the division His word causes and how challenging the mission field is, even in our own families, yet Jesus reminded us that He is the focus of our mission work and He is also our strength.

The Celtic Christians understood this well. They didn't set up their monasteries in high and lofty places, rather the training of disciples to go out into the world happened right alongside the major trade routes so as they were sent out they stepped right onto the busy path of life to be as Jesus to all people in their everyday life.

They also taught them something important to expect opposition and resistance.

So in the same way let us not set up safe places where we can hide or be too comfortable and live a life for self without thinking too much of the needs of others. Remember Jesus saw the people and had compassion on them – to have compassion is literally to co suffer with others in our hearts. Let us live to pray for others, all those who are in need and let us minister or serve others with the gifts and talents and skills the Lord first gave to us. Especially to share the love of God. We love because God first loved us.

Jesus reminds us that the world will hate you and I because the world hated Jesus first. But remember you are valuable. You are worth more than many sparrows. And so we know it will not be easy to

share Jesus in this world, yet we are encouraged by our Lord. Follow me and I will teach you my way. Follow me Jesus says and I will show you those in need. Follow me Jesus says and I will strengthen you and give you peace in all you do.

“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

As someone welcomes you because of your faith, they welcome Jesus and the one who sent Him. This is life changing.

When a little one, the newest or youngest disciples of Jesus comes to you with a message receive them. For you receive Jesus in that action of grace and love.

Who finds it easy to give? Who finds it easy to receive? Or do you find it easier to give than receive?

Know that God serves you through others just as you serve God by serving others. Receive the gifts from the Lord’s people from fellow believers as a gift from God. Give to others freely as you have been given things for this life.

So go into the world. Go without fear for it is Jesus who goes with you. You are sent out in the very power of God. Amen