

3Pentecost, Matthew 9:35-10:8
Rev. Kimberly Glenn
June 14, 2026

God of peace and God of mercy, it is through your grace that my lips proclaim your truth with boldness. Amen.

It's human nature, isn't it, that when something goes wrong, most of us have the same instinct. We start looking around for someone who knows more about whatever failed so that it can be fixed. For instance, if I'm at the airport, and my flight suddenly gets canceled I go straight to the desk at the gate. I want to connect with someone who can tell me what to do next. When I discover that I have a flat tire, I call Triple A. And, here at the church office, when there's a problem with the printer I go immediately to the one who knows about all of our equipment. I go to Bett. If she can't fix it, she knows exactly who can. And now, as an extra bonus, when I've got a computer issue I have two great resources just steps away. I can go to Sarah, who is a whiz at computers, as is Bett. And after a storm like the one we had Friday night, when a tree might fall across my driveway blocking my exit, I call Charles Glenn... and he calls Abbott Tree Service... people who know what they're doing.

We all want somebody who knows what they're doing when things are going wrong. In today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus considered the crowd of people who showed up wherever he went, he realized they were people who were desperate for leadership. They were like sheep without a shepherd who longed for guidance, for help, and for hope. Matthew says they were people who were 'harassed and helpless.' Jesus was moved by a deep sense of compassion for them.

The surprising part is not that Jesus notices their need. The surprising part is who he decides to send out to help them. He did not choose scholars. He did not choose doctors or

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religious all-stars. He chose to send twelve people from out of the very people he hoped to help . He sent the twelve people he chose to be his disciples because they knew very intimately what their struggles were like because they had lived with them, too.

Jesus felt their suffering deep inside his gut. That is literally how the Greek word can be translated. It is derived from a root word that refers to inner human organs, to the heart, the lungs and the liver. It's that feeling that so many of us know; that ache, that twisting, that knot we sometimes feel in our core when we are stressed or anxious. The suffering of the people around him made Jesus feel that way. We can ignore that feeling, take something like Tums to control it and pretend that the feeling goes away. Or we can do as Jesus did and take action. Jesus was willing and able to respond to their need for love and for guidance, just as He is willing and able to respond to us - to our grief and loneliness, our anxiety and disappointment.. He is willing to respond to our need to be guided.

Don't look for him to respond to you through experts or politicians or scholars or internet personalities. According to the story in today's gospel, Jesus will send someone who knows you and knows what you have been through. Out of the crowds of people Jesus encountered, he chose twelve from among them. They were ordinary people. They were fishermen, tax collectors, and ordinary laborers. They were people with unique skills, and very different personalities and opinions who had one very important thing in common... they trusted Jesus. They believed in Jesus' mission. They believed in Him.

Jesus chose them because they were regular people who did not believe they knew everything. They wanted to learn what he was teaching, wanted to receive the grace he was

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offering them. Jesus took the time to train them to listen, really listen. He taught them to love others the way he loved them. He transformed them into a people who had hope and a confidence that God's promise to Abraham was true, that he would always be with them. They trusted that they were an integral part of God's purpose. Jesus had chosen them to help bring God's dream of wholeness, peace, and justice into the reality they knew.

Once called, Jesus didn't send them out to foreign territory. He said, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He sent them into what was familiar among the people whose language they understood, whose struggles they could relate to. When you think about it, that was a brilliant move on Jesus' part. He knew the risk of failure would be lower if they weren't bombarded with the challenges of entering territory where they might not be welcomed, where they might be considered to be threatening, or uninvited interlopers, or, in today's terminology agitators. In this familiar environment where they were known and felt at ease, they could build confidence in their new roles as His disciples. They could learn that they could rely on God to guide them.

Think about it. A coach doesn't start a new athlete in a championship game. A musician's first performance isn't in a concert hall. Similarly, the newly recruited disciples developed their preaching, teaching, and healing 'muscles' among Israelites. When we begin to sense our own calls to God's service, we take baby steps. We might volunteer to be mentors to area school children, we might sit with a sick or grieving friend, we might deliver a meal or flowers to ailing members of our church. We might volunteer to serve as an usher, a greeter, or sing in the choir. We are not first called to go and change the world or serve in the church as a bishop.

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Every church today contains the same two groups that Jesus knew, those in the crowd who are longing for healing and a sense of direction and those who are hearing a call to serve. Many are both at the same time. The truth about discipleship is that disciples never completely leave the crowd they came out of behind. We remember that we are all longing for God's grace even while we are pouring God's grace and love out for others. Some of you here today may need to hear Jesus say, "Come to Me, know Me and trust Me. Let Me shepherd you." Others of us may need to hear Jesus when he is calling us. He is saying, "You've been sitting at my feet long enough. It's time to get to work."

The message for today is simple. The disciples are called from among the lost sheep. They are trained and formed as disciples to be servants. As servants of the Lord they are empowered to bring healing to other lost sheep. That, my friends, is how God's kingdom grows - one lost sheep at a time.

When Jesus looks upon the crowds of today do you think maybe he is still saying what he said then, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest?" The question is, will those who have acknowledged and received Christ's compassion allow him to prepare them as disciples? Will they allow him to strengthen their service muscles then go out into the world to bless others? You don't need a clerical collar, or a title or special blessing of any kind in order to *be* a blessing. All you need is to remember that you, too, were once a lost sheep. You are human just like your neighbor. As one of his disciples, the difference is that Jesus has empowered you to take His love into the world. So go forth and be a blessing to someone today. Amen.