

Scripture for Sunday, June 14, 2020

Matthew 9:35-10:23 The Message (MSG) by Eugene H. Peterson

³⁵⁻³⁸ Then Jesus made a circuit of all the towns and villages. He taught in their meeting places, reported kingdom news, and healed their diseased bodies, healed their bruised and hurt lives. When he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd. “What a huge harvest!” he said to his disciples. “How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands!”

The Twelve Harvest Hands

10 ¹⁻⁴ The prayer was no sooner prayed than it was answered. Jesus called twelve of his followers and sent them into the ripe fields. He gave them power to kick out the evil spirits and to tenderly care for the bruised and hurt lives. This is the list of the twelve he sent:

Simon (they called him Peter, or “Rock”),
Andrew, his brother,
James, Zebedee’s son,
John, his brother,
Philip,
Bartholomew,
Thomas,
Matthew, the tax man,
James, son of Alphaeus,
Thaddaeus,
Simon, the Canaanite,
Judas Iscariot (who later turned on him).

⁵⁻⁸ Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge:

“Don’t begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don’t try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

⁹⁻¹⁰ “Don’t think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don’t need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.

¹¹ “When you enter a town or village, don’t insist on staying in a luxury inn. Get a modest place with some modest people, and be content there until you leave.

¹²⁻¹⁵ “When you knock on a door, be courteous in your greeting. If they welcome you, be gentle in your conversation. If they don’t welcome you, quietly withdraw. Don’t make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way. You can be sure that on Judgment Day they’ll be mighty sorry—but it’s no concern of yours now.

¹⁶ “Stay alert. This is hazardous work I’m assigning you. You’re going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don’t call attention to yourselves. Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ “Don’t be naive. Some people will impugn your motives, others will smear your reputation—just because you believe in me. Don’t be upset when they haul you before the civil authorities. Without knowing it, they’ve done you—and me—a favor, given you a platform for preaching the kingdom news! And don’t worry about what you’ll say or how you’ll say it. The right words will be there; the Spirit of your Father will supply the words.

²¹⁻²³ “When people realize it is the living God you are presenting and not some idol that makes them feel good, they are going to turn on you, even people in your own family. There is a great irony here: proclaiming so much love, experiencing so much hate! But don’t quit. Don’t cave in. It is all well worth it in the end. It is not success you are after in such times but survival. Be survivors! Before you’ve run out of options, the Son of Man will have arrived.