

*Pastor David Anglada' Message Outline
Grace Lutheran Church and School
Malverne, New York
www.glcas.org*

"Called To Be Prophets," Matthew 10:40-42
4th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, June 28th, 2020

Matthew 10:40-42:40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41
Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42 and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."



Prayer for Illumination:

Terrifying Word, Life-giving Word, sanctifying Word, come to us as ones who crave water in the desert, Grant that we may hear and respond to you, yes, in fear and trembling, and also in rejoicing, through the Lamb that was slaughtered, Jesus Christ, who, with you and the Holy Spirit, is worshiped and glorified by all your saints, now and forever. Amen.

Good morning, can you recall a time when you started reading a story and the story began with challenges and difficulties to the main characters in the narration? Somehow in the middle of the story, there is a sudden reversal from opposition or defiance to Good News, New Opportunities, as well as Rewards in life. If the story you were reading were a Christian novel or tale, the positive ending would be, the story ended with the characters in the story receiving a Blessing from God!" A story can start with serious undertaking coupled with difficulties, but right before the ending, something wonderful and amazing take place.

Last week's reading burden Jesus disciples but, today we will hear how they will be blessed.

If you recall, last week's sermon was on how Jesus tells his disciples that following Him, or discipleship was going to be a difficult challenge in their lives. We also heard the following discourse from Jesus:

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."¹

Today the Gospel text is a continuation from last week's reading. In our passage this morning, Jesus explains the role of His followers within God's plan. Especially the value of the mission of the church. Plus, His words of encouragement and rewards.

Jesus is telling his disciples to stand on the doorstep of a house and knock on the door as prophets of God, or as Christ ambassadors. Christ expects people to welcome you into their homes with a spirit of Shaliah; what is Shaliah?

In the Jewish community, there is a custom called Shaliah².

According to shaliah custom, people were expected to treat the king's emissary as if he or she were a king or queen themselves.

You had better treat the kings' messenger as if he or she were VIP-a Very Important Person. You had better roll out the red carpet. You had better provide a nice dinner for the king's messenger. You had better put him up for the night in a lovely guest room.

The homeowner slowly opens the door and says, how can I help you; you reply, the kingdom of God is at hand; Jesus is the promised messiah. Afterword's the homeowner invites you to come into his or her home. And say's to you come in, let me wash your feet, let give you a drink of water, we have fish and bread please have something to eat, welcome to our home.

Once you come into the homeowner's home, you continue your conversation and add the following to your previous introduction remarks; I want to share with you about a man called Jesus he is the messiah and wants to save us.

If the homeowner treated you with dignity along with respect, the homeowner received the blessing of the prophet. The blessing of the prophet stems from a Jewish tradition. When a prophet of God came to your home, the prophet would pronounce a blessing on your home along with God's favor upon you and your household. It is very similar when the pastor at the end of worship service says the benediction. The benediction is declaring a blessing to all the participants in attendance.

Jesus is telling his disciples that they are now being sent into the world as prophets, as ambassadors, or as missionaries, or as His representatives. According to Jesus, a prophet is totally dependent on God and the hospitality of people. "The Prophet is to trust that God will provide for all their basic needs."³

Disciples are called to be prophets to speak on behalf of God and declare God's rewards to any household that welcomes them. Shaliah!

Jesus is not only commissioning his disciples to be prophets but to be righteous people. Additionally, Jesus calls them little ones.

Who are prophets, they speak on behalf of God. Usually, prophets proclaim what God sent them to impart to others. In most cases, God sent prophets to straighten out people who were doing the wrong things. In some instances, God sent prophets to rebuke the rich and powerful for mistreating the poor and powerless-widows, orphans, and such.

Secondly, God sends his disciples to help righteous people; righteous people are people who obey God, people who try to do what God wants them to do, people who love God and neighbor, people whose lives honor God. If a family welcomes a righteous stranger, God will reward the family as being themselves righteous.

Thirdly, Jesus promises that whosoever provides water to one of his little ones will receive and retain their reward. The little ones are Jesus disciples who are dependent on God for all their needs. The little ones are the numerous unnamed followers of Jesus: the widows, the orphans, the marginalized, the underemployed, and individuals who are food-deprived as well as the poor.

Today's gospel is calling us to be prophets; in other words, to be messengers of Christ in the world.

What is our role as prophets in the world?

To be voices of Good News that proclaim God love for humanity

God is calling us to be prophets to proclaim God's salvation for our world

God is calling us to be prophets to proclaim God's joy and eternal peace.

God is calling us to be prophets that will bring a word of healing to sick, to the raise the dead; people who are spiritually and emotionally deprived. Furthermore, many in the church community are emotionally as well as spiritually wounded; we are to bring a word of healing plus restoration.

Perhaps God is calling us to be prophets who can serve in soup kitchens along with food pantries.

Perhaps God is calling us to be prophets who would use our voices to speak out against hate, racism, homophobia, violence, misogyny, including injustice in our world?

Could it be that God is calling us to be prophets who will be advocates for poor people who have been disfranchised, as well as marginalized in our society?

Or maybe God is calling us to be prophets that would make time to visit nursing homes in conjunction with reading the newspaper or a book to a lonely aging person.

Could it be that maybe God is calling you to be a prophet that spends several hours praying for people who are hurting in the world jointly with our communities?

God is still answering our prayers

Prayer changes things.

God is still doing the impossible.

What kind of prophet is God calling you to be?

Mother Teresa reminds us "that every day we encounter Christ in "distressing disguise" in those hungry not only for bread but hungry for love; naked not only for clothing but naked of human dignity and respect; homeless not only for want of a room of bricks but homeless because of rejection."⁴

My good friends, we are living in a time of great spiritual hunger. Also, people are hurting inwardly; we have a Message from the Master. Dear saint's God, God is calling us to be prophets in our world today.

Before ending I, end my message, I wonder if today's gospel text is also asking us, how welcoming are we, in welcoming the stranger in our church or better yet in our homes? What about this question, do we provide hospitality to the stranger?

Response to the Word:

“What does carrying the cross look like in the world? How does loving God more than our friends and family work? Let us find ways to authentically find our lives, risking what we need, learning how to love radically, and walking in the steps of Jesus. As we pour out our self-interest, let us drink the steadfast love of God. Let us absorb salvation and abiding grace. Amen.”⁵

Endnotes

¹ Matthew 10, New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

² Dick Donovan, Sermon Writer, Matthew 10: 40-42.

³ Pam Driesell, Feasting on The Word Commentary-Feasting on the Gospels-Matthew, Volume 1, Chapters 1-13 (WJK, Louisville, Kentucky, 2013), 282.

⁴ Ibid. 280

⁵ Marry Scifres and B.J. Beu ed. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020 (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2019), 142-143.