

Luke 10:1-20
4th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9)
July 3, 2022—Shepherd of the Mountains, Pinetop, AZ

INI

Would you like them in a house?
Would you like them with a mouse?
Would you eat them in a box?
Would you eat them with a fox?

NOT IN A BOX. NOT WITH A FOX.
NOT IN A HOUSE. NOT WITH A MOUSE.
I WOULD NOT EAT THEM HERE OR THERE.
I WOULD NOT EAT THEM ANYWHERE.
I WOULD NOT EAT GREEN EGGS AND HAM.
I DO NOT LIKE THEM, SAM-I-AM!

I'm sure many of you recognize these words from the book by Dr. Seuss, "Green Eggs and Ham." No matter how hard he tries, and in whatever situation, the resistant protagonist of the book just will not try the green eggs and ham, an offer from Sam-I-Am. These two characters find themselves with a fox and a mouse, in a tree and on a train. They end up in the dark as well as in a box, and even in the rain. Sam-I-Am never stops offering the green eggs and ham. And until the very end, the top hatted protagonist refuses them.

Let's hold onto this book for a moment. And we'll come back to it after turning to our Gospel reading.

In Luke chapter 10, we hear about how Jesus sent the 72 disciples to go ahead of Him in pairs, or 2 by 2, to prepare the way for Jesus. They are sent into the communities along Jesus' path. The 72 disciples are to enter the towns and they are not supposed to bring money or really anything at all. Just go! No shoes. No luggage.

And when they get to the town, they enter a house and proclaim peace. They walk in and say "shalom," which means peace. And if they are *received*, then they will be cared for by that family. And *if not* they leave the *entire town*, and leave everyone there to their fate knowing that the kingdom of God is near. And that those that *receive* the peace of God will *know peace*. And those that *reject* these men of God's peace will *not know* peace.

How's *that* for an evangelism strategy?!

Now *thankfully* Jesus has *never* said *for us* to do this. At no point did Jesus direct *all His disciples*, meaning us, to go 2 by 2 to cities without any luggage or money and to enter a house and proclaim God's peace there. This is not how *we* are sent. You could if you want, I suppose, but God sends us differently...

Even though God does not send us in the same way as the 72 disciples, we *are still sent* by Jesus. In fact, we are sent *for the same reason* as the 72 disciples. And we bear the *same message*, a message of peace. That is because every Christian is part of the same mission of God and we carry the same proclamation of peace. And it is this message of peace that is actually so divisive! It is the message of peace that makes being sent by God really tough sometimes. Because the message of peace is life-changing.

Many people think of "peace" as much smaller and much less transformative than it really is. When Jesus talks about peace He isn't talking only about peace like "peace and quiet." And He isn't talking only about peace as in love and kindness between family, friends, and neighbors. And Jesus means much more than peace as the end of war and conflict. These are all *part* of the peace of God—the shalom He brings. But the peace that Jesus' disciples speak is the *peace of God!* The same peace we hear about in our reading today from Isaiah 66. Listen again to the end of the reading:

¹² **For thus says the Lord:**

**"Behold, I will extend *peace* to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,
and bounced upon her knees.**

¹³ **As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.**

¹⁴ **You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants,**

and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.”

The peace of God—the same peace that disciples are sent to bring—is the peace of creation with its creator. It's the *eternal peace* of God which will be to us like a mother. The peace of God who is a caring comforter, which sees us flourish in the name of God. Peace which protects *us* from evil, protects *from our evil action*, the death of sin, and the hatred of evil in the world. This peace encompasses *all worldly ideas* of peace. Because it is a peace *from God* which truly, we cannot wrap our minds around.

When the 72 disciples walked into a house and said shalom/peace, they were bringing the peace of God, an *eternal peace and joy* to them, because they brought the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ and *His* defeat over evil and His *peaceful victory*.

That is why when a household or town *rejected* their peace, they left them to their unfortunate fate. But when they were *received*, the people there received the first taste of the never-ending peace of God in Christ. They were receiving or rejecting the Kingdom of God and the peace it brings.

You are people of the peace of God, just as the 72 were. You have been given peace with God, not war. Though we are sinners you have been given silence and reprieve from evil. And you have been given a *permanent promise* of eternal life without pain or tears. You are members of God's kingdom. You are people of *God's peace*. And you are *sent!*

You are sent into the world, into places, into jobs and schools, into restaurants and stores...You are sent because, as Jesus told His disciples then, “The harvest is plentiful.”

Now I don't want you to think as some of our brothers and sisters do...that when we talk about a harvest and workers to bring it in, that you think it is all about us “winning souls” and saving people. Even Jesus says that is the wrong way of thinking. Our first thought, as Jesus says in verse 20, is to “Rejoice that *our names* are written in heaven.”

When we go into the harvest, *we are not the savior*. We are *sinners* who are *saved* by grace through faith because of the love of Christ. So when we go, we carry our own peace of God into a world that so very much needs peace. The harvest is *not a great work we do*, but *a blessing we share*. You are a worker *sent* into the field to bring in a harvest. That means you are a saved person of God who has been given the peace of God. And you are sent into a world that needs peace.

I'm willing to bet You know someone who could use the good news of Jesus Christ. Someone who needs to know that there is peace with God in eternity, even if there is not peace for them on earth right now. They need to know that there *is* peace. And you can share the peace that you have already received.

The harvest that is to be brought in is a harvest of peace between people and God.

So I promised we'd come back to the book “Green Eggs and Ham,” because as I was thinking about all the ways that Jesus has sent us as messengers of His peace, it started to sound in my head like the book by Dr. Seuss.

Because Jesus really has sent us into so many places. He has sent His peace into so many lives through you, His disciple of peace.

So here's a little stab at a SOTM version of Green Eggs and Ham. But instead of Sam-I-Am talking, it's Jesus.

“You find My peace when you read My book.

You find My peace where I say to look.

You My peace while gathered here.

You receive My Peace with hearts of cheer.

You receive My peace through the means of grace.

And you take My peace into every place.

You take My peace on a train.

You take My peace when it rains.

You take My peace to your job or school.

You take My peace to the lake or the pool.

You take My peace when you go out there.

You *can give* My peace anywhere.

Now I pray that God's peace, which surpasses all our human understanding may keep your hearts and minds faithful to Jesus, here, there and everywhere. Amen.