Isaiah 66:10–14

 **10 “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,**

**all you who love her;**

 **rejoice with her in joy,**

**all you who mourn over her;**

 **11 that you may nurse and be satisfied**

**from her consoling breast;**

 **that you may drink deeply with delight**

**from her glorious abundance.”**

 **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.**

Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

**Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5For each will have to bear his own load.**

**6Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. 7Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

**14But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

**17From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.**

**18The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.**

Luke 10:1–20

**﻿﻿﻿ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. 2And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ 6And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. 9Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 11‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.**

**13“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.**

**16“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”**

**17The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” 18And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**

Peace “to you” “for you”

God does not do things the way we expect Him to do them.  If I had God’s ultimate power and His Ultimate Good News, I would let everyone know powerfully: perhaps write it in the sky, have an angel chorus in the sky, or carve it into the mountains.  But I am not God, and God has chosen the opposite way to get out the message.  God has chosen to get His message out through the very natural method of human proclamation.

Remember from last Sunday’s Gospel Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem.  That means that Jesus had absolutely determined that He was going to Jerusalem to sacrifice Himself for us on the cross.

As we continue following Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, we learn that Jesus allowed extra time in His journey to minister in the towns and places along the road.  In today’s Gospel, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he Himself was about to go.  Jesus used these seventy-two sinners to prepare people for His coming. Yes, Jesus sent sinners to proclaim His Good News to the people.  We are so used to the idea that sinners proclaim the Word of God that we don’t even think about how strange an idea that is.  Jesus put His most precious Good News into the mouths of filthy sinners.

Sinners like James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on an unsuspecting Samaritan village just because they didn’t want Jesus to pass through their town,  Peter, you know the one to whom He had to say, “Get behind me, Satan!” and good old doubting Thomas.

Then, don’t forget Judas.  Judas, betrayer, the one who would hang himself in despair!  Every one of these disciples had failed Jesus multiple times, and would fail Jesus many times again after the events in today’s Gospel.  These are not the men that I would choose to get out the word if I were God.  But then, I am not God.

In spite of all that Jesus still entrusted His message to them.  He even said, **“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”** Jesus promised that even though they were sinners, His message would remain intact in their mouths.  People were to pay no attention to the sins of the messengers.  Instead, they were to pay attention to the truth of the message.

What is this precious, holy message?  In today’s Gospel, Jesus said, **“Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’”** This is no ordinary peace.  This is the peace of God that passes all understanding.  This is the peace that Jesus would soon earn when He finished His journey to Jerusalem and kept His appointment with the cross.

Jesus also told them to heal and preach**.  “Whenever you enter a town and they receive you … Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”** The Kingdom of God is different from earthly kingdoms.  Here on this earth, we say that someone is a king because he rules a kingdom, the king depends on the kingdom.  When it comes to the Kingdom of God, things are the other way around.  The kingdom is the kingdom because Christ the king rules it, the kingdom depends on the king.  When we say that the kingdom of God has come near to you, we are saying that the king has come near to you.  That king is Jesus Christ Himself.

There were great blessings for the people who received these messengers from Jesus: **“Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.  Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”** They would receive the blessing that we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer.  God’s Kingdom came to them with its blessings.

So far, everything about this mission sounds pretty good, but there is also a dark side to this mission.  It begins in the instructions.  Jesus began with a warning, **“Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.”** As wonderful as God’s peace and His kingdom are, there will be some people who will attack you for it.  There will always be people who reject God’s peace and His kingdom.  There will always be those who hate God’s message and His messengers.

Jesus had stern words of judgment for the people who rejected the words of His servants: **“Whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”** Remember Sodom?  Sodom was the city that God destroyed with fire and brimstone back in Genesis.  Jesus very clearly states that those who refuse to listen to God’s Word will suffer a judgment worse than Sodom.

We sometimes forget that the coming of Jesus means two very different things depending on how He comes.  He comes with grace and every blessing, or He comes in severe judgment.

Yes, Jesus Christ died for the sins of the entire world.  Jesus has earned the forgiveness of sins for every man, woman, and child who ever has or ever will live, all people in all places in all times, every person you know, even the worst human beings who ever lived, Nero burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians, Genghis Khan, the people who carried out the Spanish inquisition, burning 1000’s at the stake, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Osama Bin Laden, whoever you can name, Jesus earned forgiveness for them.  Even Judas Iscariot, Jesus earned forgiveness for him.

Even though Jesus earned forgiveness for these horrible villains, the odds that they are or will be with the Lord are extremely low.  The problem lies in those two little words “to you.” Jesus earned forgiveness for everyone, but some people reject that forgiveness.  It is not the Lord’s fault that anyone suffers forever.  He has earned forgiveness of sins for everyone.  The Holy Spirit offers that forgiveness through the Gospel to everyone.  The only thing the Holy Spirit does not do is jam the Gospel down people’s throats.  Some people resist the Holy Spirit and reject the Gospel.

In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther explains the Lord’s Prayer.  When He gets to the second petition, He says this: Thy kingdom come.  What does this mean? The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself. But we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.  How is this done?  When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and there in eternity.  We pray in this petition that it may come to us.

Two little words take the Gospel from objective fact to personal reality.  Those two words become the truth when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word.  The Holy Spirit’s gift of faith makes the difference.  Without that faith, the life of Jesus is just a collection of the objective facts.  With that faith, the life of Jesus Christ is the way of salvation for me … and you.

Two little words can make such a difference.  Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins can add two words to the objective facts.  Listen to the difference this makes.  Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.  Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary for you.  Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate.  Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate for you.  Jesus died on the cross.  Jesus died on the cross for you.  Jesus rose from the dead.  Jesus rose from the dead for you.  Jesus ascended into heaven.  Jesus ascended into heaven for you.  From there He will come.  From there He will come for you.  Two little words … “for you” … They make all the difference here in time and forever in eternity.  Jesus is for you.  Amen