

Rev. Shaun Arndt  
Peace, Sun Prairie  
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Pentecost 8

**Mark 6:7-13**  
**Jesus calls me to share in His work.**

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. Amen.*

*Dear friends in Christ,*

Can you picture it? Jesus' close friends he had chosen and called gather around Him. He speaks to them again of God's saving love, how He came to be their Savior and give them a lasting home in heaven. And then He does something most amazing, He **calls** these believers, ordinary sinful human beings to **share in His work**, to be His coworkers in the important task of telling about God's forgiving love!

I know you can picture it, because I was describing you and me. *You are* Jesus' close friends, for whom He laid down His life on the cross!

This very day, we have gathered around Jesus in His Word. Through our Bible readings and liturgy, He has

spoken to us of His great and saving love. And as we learn from our Gospel lesson Jesus does the most amazing thing: **Jesus calls us to share in His work.**

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus sent **the twelve** apostles out on a preaching mission. He sent them to do the same work He himself had been doing. He had preached the message: **Repent and believe the good news!**” To keep the promises of the Old Testament and show He was indeed the promised Savior, Jesus’ message was accompanied by miracles of healing. Driving out demons showed how Jesus had come to destroy the devil’s work.

But since the Son of God did not make full and constant use of His power when He came to save us, the work Jesus had to do was too much for any one man, even the sinless, perfect God-man.

Therefore, Jesus had chosen twelve of his followers, who He trained as they followed and learned from Him. Now, **He sent them out two by two** so that they could carry His saving message out to even more people. Jesus saw a need for people to hear His Word, and sent messengers to speak that Word.

The same is true today. There is still a great need for Jesus' saving Word and messengers to speak that word. With 7 billion people alive on our planet today, there has likely never been a mission field as big as the one around us today. There is a tremendous need for people to hear about Christ the only Savior.

But don't *just* think of places like Africa, India and China that need God's Word. Think also of places like Dane County and Sun Prairie. A resource that tracks religious information shows that 61% of people in Sun Prairie are not connected to any church. That means three out of every five people in our community are not hearing the eternal life giving voice of the Savior's Word.

To meet this need, Jesus still **sends His messengers** today. He still gives His church public ministers: pastors, teachers, staff ministers and missionaries to preach and teach His Word and to encourage God's people to share in the work of inviting others to know their Savior.

Such gospel workers are still called by Jesus through His Church, His believing people. We call our pastors

and teachers *called workers* because they are called by Jesus through the congregation, called to represent and serve both the Savior and His people.

So you see, Jesus **calls us to share in His work as we send His messengers!** Obvious examples of this would be your pastors, the teachers in our school and our early childhood director, Mrs. Duin. They teach and preach God's Word in our congregation and classrooms speaking of God's love and preparing others to speak of their Savior.

But we also share in Jesus work **to send His messengers** to distant lands as with our prayers and mission offerings we support home and world missions and by supporting our high schools, college and seminary to train future pastors and teachers.

There's also this: Every pastor or teacher can tell you that they are where they are today because of the encouragement and support of: parents, grandparents, teachers, friends and congregation members.

So look for young men who think you have the gifts to be a pastor or teacher and young women you think have

the gifts to be a teacher, and then tell them what you see, encourage them and pray for them, knowing Jesus might use that to **send His messengers** of the next generation.

Now when the Lord sends **His messengers**, He doesn't leave them on their own, but promises to **support them**. When Jesus sent out the **twelve** he told them they didn't need to pack money for food and lodging or an extra coat to keep warm camping outside.

Instead He said: **When you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town**. Jesus would use the people the Apostle served with God's Word to **support** them with food and place to stay.

We also **share in Jesus work as we support His messengers**. Our pastors and teachers don't stay in your houses, but you provide us with a salary so we can make studying and sharing God's Word our full time jobs. Our offerings also go to support Gospel messengers beyond our own congregation as we **support** Lakeside Lutheran High School, our synod schools, and missionaries.

But the work of **supporting** the Lord's **messengers** goes beyond paying for bodily needs. Called workers also need your prayers, and to hear you encourage them with the promises of God's Word. They need you to share in the work of the congregation and school by giving of your time and abilities, because they can't do it on their own.

But the greatest support you can give the Lord's messengers is to **receive** them, that is, to listen to their message! Some of the greatest help you can give your pastor is by faithfully hearing God's Word, reading your Bible, having home devotions, coming to a Bible class to dig deeper and learn from discussing Bible truths with fellow Christians to help equip you to serve in even more ways. **Receive His messengers** by listening to His Word.

And this was the message the Apostles gave: **They went out and preached that people should repent.** There is a lot in that Bible word **repent**. **Repent** means God changes our mind about our sin as His holy law tells us we have all sinned, falling short of the perfection we owe to our Creator. **Repent** involves the Holy Spirit working through the Word to bring us to

admit the horrible truth that even on our best days, all we have a right to expect from God is eternal death in hell.

But the way the Bible usually uses the word **repent** also means trusting that Jesus alone has saved us from our sins. **Repent** means God changes our mind of how we are saved, that it is nothing we do, but only because of His undeserved love that sent Jesus.

**Repent** involves the Holy Spirit working through the Word to convince us that God gave His one and only Son for the world, and that means He sent Jesus to forgive us and prepare a perfect home for us in heaven. This is the message the Apostles preached, the message Jesus wants us to **receive**.

So let's do that right now. Let us admit our sins and failures to the Lord. Like you, I have so many! Not only have I failed to be a perfect pastor, but also a perfect husband and father and caretaker of my body and so many other sins of thought and word and action.

As you listen to the Holy law of God, you also know your own sins, including how you share with me the

failure to always gladly **share** in Jesus work of sending and supporting His messengers and to truly appreciate the work the Lord does for us through them. As repentant followers of Jesus, please join me in a moment of silence admitting our sin and sinfulness to the Lord. (silence)

But then also join me in breathing a sigh of relief and a heart filled with joy to know that the tremendous good news that the Lord does turn away from us! Sinners though we are, He receives us, forgiving every sin and removing all guilt! Know with the certainty of the Word of God, that every sin, every failure, every vile spot is gone, forgotten, forgiven, wiped clean.

Yes, it's so, because Jesus took your sin and mine, the sin of the world, and He nailed it to the cross, paying for it in full with His suffering hell and death instead of us. Jesus did not leave behind even one single sin to still accuse us, but erased them all as His rising from the dead proves. Know that Jesus still welcomes you and me, those weary and burdened with sin and He still gives us rest in His gift of forgiveness, peace, and a place in heaven.

Through this saving Word of peace, Jesus draws you close to Himself as His forgiven child. Through the same Word Jesus also give you strength for each day and calls you again to **share in His work** as we **send, support and receive** His messengers. Amen.

*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into His harvest field. Amen.*