



WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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# **Go Your Way**

Rev. Louise Rogers

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**Luke 10:1-8**

***The Mission of the Seventy***

*After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."*

Recently Bill and I took a short trip to New York City to attend an important event. We arrived at the Pittsburgh airport early in the morning to discover our flight had a brief weather delay. This was followed by three more weather delays. By midafternoon we were frustrated and wondering if we were even going to get out of Pittsburgh and make it to New York City that day. I stepped up to get information from the gate attendant. She simply held up her smart phone, which was set on the Weather App, so I could see the bright green blob of bad weather descending on New York City. “I know what you know” she said with a smile. I returned to my seat even more discouraged with no new information.

By this time the passengers for the afternoon flight from Pittsburgh to La Guardia airport had begun to arrive and we all waited impatiently looking out the window hoping for a plane to appear. We began to eye each other with suspicion. When a plane did show up, who would get on the plane and who would be left behind? You could hear grumbling from every corner of the gate area.

Suddenly a voice rang out over the loud speaker, “Folks, this is your pilot. I have just flown in from New York City and I will be piloting your flight this afternoon. I can tell you it will be a bumpy ride. The flights attendants will be seated the entire flight. Go to the restrooms before you board the flight. I think we can make it as there is a break in the weather. Trust me in this adventure -- we will be boarding soon. This is your captain!”

Given that I had never heard a message quite like this one, I looked over to see who was speaking. He looked very young to me. But indeed we did have to trust this young, confident captain as he was our guide, the one

charting our path. Every person on that New York flight had to believe the young pilot was trained and experienced and most important, he would get us home safely. In the bigger picture, each one of us has to decide whose voice we will listen to every day. Who do we ultimately trust with our life? Do we trust the person enough to follow where they lead?

Jesus stood before his followers and directed them to go out into the harvest to work for God. The workers did not just hear the voice of the captain; they heard the voice of God sending them. You are my messengers – I am sending you out where I intend to go. Jesus doesn't sugar coat the conditions, "Go on your way. I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Don't take any supplies with you, not even an overnight bag or extra shoes. You carry such an important message don't pause to hang out with others you find on the road. When you arrive at your destination, stay at the first house where you are welcomed." In other words, don't get bogged down with the details.

Jesus is not saying that preparations are bad. Ask any leader of a short term mission trip and you will be assured that a packing list, attendance rosters and directions are all key to a successful experience. Followers must depend on Jesus. As CS Lewis says "**relying on God has to begin every day as if nothing had yet been done.**" Jesus does want for his followers to stay focused on their mission to share the Good News with others. The Good News that God is with us, God knows each one of us intimately and loves us abundantly. We are offered new life in Jesus Christ and we can invite others to come and see. What matters most is finding ways and places to share this message.

To live faithfully for God at times will be bumpy. The wolves are more sophisticated than when Jesus walked the earth. Yet wolves can be spotted all the time and we are called to live among them. We should not be afraid for the Good Shepherd is with us. When we call on God in prayer, God will be for us “our refuge and our fortress” (Psalm 91). God will answer us, giving us strength not to yield to worldly ideas contrary to God, but strengthening us to carry the signs of the kingdom including hope, love, generosity, justice and joy that echo of the kingdom of God. We are never sent out alone on our journey of faith. What a blessing to have the faith community where we support each other, where we can learn and we can be an encouragement to each other.

Thea Racelis is a Christian author who has at times had a bumpy time seeing where God wants her to go. She writes of her experience of being called by God to be a foster parent. This is a fulfilling call but not always an easy path. “I may not always be sure of the way forward, but the worst advice I heard” she said “was to be cautious with our love. Well-meaning friends said things like, You know this is risky, Be careful.” Thea responds like this, “When faced with life’s many uncertainties, the answer is never going to be love less. If that is the answer then you are asking the wrong question. I would not be a Christian if I wanted to stay safe. I will love as much and as hard as I can for as long as I can.”<sup>1</sup> That’s all that any of us who try to live a Christian life can do. We can trust God enough to risk loving the world. We can choose love as our way to share God’s message.

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<sup>1</sup> Heath, Emily, Christian Century, Cheap Resistance. June 20, 2018. P. 10.

Jesus didn't stop sending people to carry his important message when the seventy were commissioned. He continues to send all of God's people who hear the call. It's you and me, sisters and brothers, and everyone who will pay attention to his words. "Go your way" is a call to walk the road that has been set before us. We don't chart that road ahead of time. Instead, we try to walk daily by faith. Step by step, to go our way, as set forth. We trust that the Spirit of the Lord is with us. God has anointed us to bring Good News to a world desperate to hear of God's love and to see authentic love in action.

The Deacons at Westminster are commissioned for caring and serving ministries. Recently they held the Gala, a big fundraiser for the Open Door which is a program to support kids and families with an afterschool program and other services in the Crafton Heights neighborhood. This is one way the commandment to love our neighbor is put into action. At the end of our monthly Deacon meetings we have begun to share a blessing with each other. This benediction comes from Rev. Richard Halverson (1916-1995) who was a PCUSA pastor and chaplain to the U.S. Senate. It reminds us that we have a purpose, and God calls us to follow Christ wherever we are. As we leave the Deacon meeting and go from the church building we continue to be commissioned with God's call. The blessing is for all of us to remind us to listen for the voice of Jesus who is our captain, as we go on our way.

You go nowhere by accident.

Wherever you go, God is sending you.

Wherever you are, God has put you there.

God has a purpose in your being there.



Christ lives in you and has something he wants to do through you where you are.

Believe this and go in the grace and love and power of Jesus Christ.

— Rev. Richard Halverson



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