

## Union Methodist Church

### Sermon Outline: **The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Part 5: Bringing in The Harvest II**

July 23rd, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 6:1-7; Matt 13:24-30, 36-43**

#### **1. Recall: The Harvest is Ripe**

This sermon is a continuation of what was started last week.

"When he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, **"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."** Matthew 9:36-38 NIV

"Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, **open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** 36 Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the Sower and the reaper may be glad together." John 4:35-36, 38

- **The Good News of the Kingdom (the Gospel), Power to be witnesses**

The central message is that **Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.**

**"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah."**

Acts 5:42 NIV

*What did the early apostles and disciples preach?*

**"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all** who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39 We are witnesses..."** Acts 10:38 NRSV

*How could they (and we) be effective witnesses to the power of Christ?*

**"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NRSV

"So I say to you: **Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you... your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"** Luke 11:10, 13 NIV

## 2. Parable of the Kingdom: Wheat and Weeds

Last week we looked at an important parable Jesus used to describe the Kingdom of God – the parable of the Sower. Today we examine another parable Jesus used.

### ○ Lessons: Parable of the Sower

- The seed is the word (message) of the Kingdom  
“The Sower sows the word” Mark 4:14  
“The word of the kingdom” Matthew 13:19 NRSV
- The human heart is the ground for the Word
- The seed will not bear fruit,
  - If there is no understanding of the word (seed on the path)
  - If it does not take root (rocky ground)
  - If a person is focused on the cares of the world and wealth (thorny ground)
- The word will bear fruit if it is understood and takes root (good soil).  
Understanding is made possible by the Holy Spirit.

### ○ Wheat and Weeds

In this parable, Jesus gives us another perspective with important lessons about the work we are engaged in as the Church and the final harvest of the kingdom in the future.

#### • Two Sowers

##### ▪ Jesus sows good seed

“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.”  
Matthew 13:37 NRSV

##### ▪ The devil sows bad seed

“the weeds are the children of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sowed them is the devil”  
Matthew 13:38,39 NRSV

#### • The Field - the world

“the field is the world.” V38

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.<sup>19</sup>Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 8:18-20 NIV

- **Two Seeds sown in the field**

- **Wheat from good Seed - children of the Kingdom**

“the good seed are the children of the kingdom”

Matthew 13:38 NRSV

“To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” John 1:12 NRSV

- **Weeds from bad seed - children of the devil**

“the weeds are the children of the evil one,” Matthew 13:38 NRSV

“You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” John 8:44 NRSV

- **The Final Harvest and the Reapers**

**“The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are**

**angels.** 40Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” Matthew 13:40-43 NRSV

### **3. Advancing the Kingdom of God**

As we said last week, we must be mindful that advancing the kingdom of God is spiritual warfare. To be effective witnesses we must have no illusions about that. How can we effectively get the good news of Christ across and see lives won and transformed for Jesus?

- **Attitude and Disposition**

“They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

42Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah."  
Acts 5:40-41 NIV

- **Dependence on the Holy Spirit**

"God, ...has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

2 Corinthians 3:6 NRSV

- **Focus Is Critical**

The story of the choosing of the first deacons of the church in Acts 6 is an important lesson for us in focus.

'So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "**It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.** 3Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. *We will turn this responsibility over to them* 4and **will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.**" Acts 6:2-4 NIV

**" we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word."** Acts 6:3 NRSV

- **Division of Labor - no role is insignificant**

"Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. *We will turn this responsibility over to them*" Acts 6:3

- **Each Role requires the Holy Spirit's work and assistance**

- **The Outcome**

"The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith." Acts 6:7 NRSV