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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA
JUNE 3, 2007
PASTOR MARK FRY

1 PASTOR MARK FRY: This summer we are going to have
2 some fun with some fun stories.

3 The Gospel of Luke, the 10th Chapter, that's where
4 we are going to find ourselves and I want to read the text
5 and then I want to show you where it's coming from and then
6 where I hope it takes us.

7 So jumping in in midstream of Luke's Gospel, the
8 10th Chapter, it's a long chapter, Luke 10.

9 "After this the Lord appointed seventy others and he
10 sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place
11 where he himself intended to go.

12 "He said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the
13 laborers are few. Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to
14 send out laborers into his harvest.

15 "Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like
16 lambs in the midst of wolves.

17 "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals. Greet no one
18 on the road.

19 "Whatever house you enter, first say peace to this
20 house, and if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace
21 will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you.

22 "Remain in the same house, eating and drinking
23 whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid.

24 "Do not move about from house to house. Whenever
25 you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set

1 before you.

2 "Cure the sick who are there and say to them, the
3 kingdom of God has come near to you.

4 "But whenever you enter a town and they do not
5 welcome you, go into the streets and say even the dust of
6 your town that clings to your feet we wipe off in protest
7 against you.

8 "Yet know this: The kingdom of God has come near.
9 I tell you on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom
10 than for that town.

11 "Woe to you, Chorazin; woe to you, Bethsaida. For
12 if the deeds of power done in you have been done in Tyre and
13 Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in
14 sackcloth and ashes.

15 "But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for
16 Tyre and Sidon than for you.

17 "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

18 "No, you will be brought down to Hades.

19 "Whoever listens to you, listens to me; whoever
20 rejects you, rejects me; and whoever rejects me rejects the
21 one who sent me.

22 "The seventy returned with joy saying, Lord, in your
23 name even the demons submit to us."

24 We'll stop there. Keep your finger there and,
25 again, to just rewind Luke's Gospel a little bit, you need to

1 see where Jesus has been and where the story of Jesus has
2 been.

3 But what we noticed in the context is from the 5th
4 Chapter through the 8th chapter, Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, the
5 disciples, the twelve, are on the road with Jesus.

6 And what they are doing is they are learning from
7 him. They do what disciples do.

8 What do disciples do?

9 Well, they watch, they learn, and they observe, and
10 then they do. It's not a spectator sport, discipleship.

11 So they are going along for basically four chapters.
12 Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 and Jesus is doing what Jesus does.

13 Preaching the kingdom, telling people that it's not
14 a future concept, it's a present reality.

15 He's feeding people, he's healing people, he's
16 curing people, he's blessing people, and that's what
17 disciples do.

18 And then in the 9th Chapter, Chapter 9, Verses 1 and
19 2, this is just the page before, Jesus called the twelve
20 together and he gave them power and authority over all
21 demons, to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim
22 the kingdom of God and to heal.

23 So they had been watching him for four chapters, the
24 twelve have, and so he sends them out.

25 He says you guys have been watching me; now do what

1 I've been doing. Preach the kingdom and heal.

2 They do and amazingly they come back successfully.

3 Jesus is so incredible. He says, you go do this,
4 and right in Verse 10, on their return, the apostles told
5 Jesus all that they had done.

6 He took them with him and he withdrew privately to a
7 place called Bethsaida.

8 What happens here is they went out and they did
9 exactly what he said.

10 They preached the kingdom just as he prescribed.
11 Notice it's 12; not 11. Judas even did it.

12 They come back and they are so excited. They want
13 to spend some time with Jesus and they want to tell him all
14 the cool things that happened.

15 And so what they do is they go off together on the
16 other side of the lake.

17 And a bunch of people had obviously been impacted by
18 what had been happening, and what happens next is they don't
19 really even get to tell him really about their success,
20 because the next thing you know all these crowds of people
21 start mobbing them and the disciples are like send them away,
22 we want to tell you what things have happened.

23 Jesus says it's getting dark and they are getting
24 hungry.

25 They go yes, send them away, they are going to be

1 needing something to eat, and Jesus goes you give them
2 something to eat. You have been watching me.

3 They do and it works. An amazing story.

4 What continues to happen in the 9th Chapter is
5 you've got Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah.

6 And then you have Jesus laying out the expectations
7 of you need to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow
8 me. In other words, do it like I do it.

9 And then in Verses 28 and following from that 9th
10 Chapter we have the story of the transfiguration.

11 This is when Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus.
12 This is the only time Moses would ever appear in the promised
13 land.

14 And then they hear this word from heaven about how
15 important it is.

16 And Peter, good disciple, he says, master, it's good
17 for us to be here, this is really holy ground.

18 But, see, Jesus doesn't want Peter to just stay on
19 holy ground; he wants him to go out and create holy ground.

20 In Chapter 9, Verses 59 through 62, he's basically
21 going to tell him there is an urgency in this thing.

22 No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is
23 fit for the kingdom of God. In other words, this is a
24 forward thinking organism.

25 And then the 10th Chapter. Chapter 10, notice in

1 the first verse Jesus appoints seventy others.

2 I don't know about you, but once in a while my
3 default mechanism gets kind of this, well, you know, twelve
4 is a pretty exclusive number of people, Peter, Andrew,
5 Thaddeus, I'm not as good as those guys. They left
6 everything and followed Jesus.

7 Notice he doesn't send the same twelve back out. He
8 sends seventy other ones.

9 Some of us thought there are only twelve disciples.
10 Well, there are, but it's an extending circle, you see, so he
11 sends out seventy others.

12 Some people ask how come seventy? There is a verse
13 in Deuteronomy that describes there are seventy nations on
14 the planet at this time.

15 So the point being Jesus wants us to get to all of
16 them.

17 But the way we get to all of them is in teams.
18 Notice in Verse 1 he sends them out in twos.

19 When Wenda and I were ordained almost 20 years ago
20 at Bethany, she chose the Bible verse for our ordination. It
21 was Mark 6:7.

22 One of the reasons being her husband's name is Mark,
23 that's me, and I'm 6'7", but what the verse says is he sent
24 them out in pairs, two-by-two.

25 Jesus believes in teamwork, because he is sending

1 you out as lambs in the midst of wolves and by yourself you
2 will not only be unsuccessful, you will be killed. So go
3 with a friend in twos, and that's what we see.

4 So the group of seventy is more capable to do the
5 mission than the group of twelve, more of a critical mass,
6 but they go in pairs.

7 So they are going out, and I want to look at a
8 little bit of evangelism, what it is and it isn't.

9 One of my favorite things to do when we are in a
10 hotel, I do the channel surfing thing because I have a lot
11 more choices and variety than I have at home.

12 I only have 27 channels at home, but when I get out
13 on the road I have ESPN and many choices.

14 We were at the hotel the other night and I had ESPN
15 Classic, ESPN II, Fox and Fox Sports, and I was like a hog in
16 the trough.

17 But a lot of times when I go, I zip into one of
18 those religion channels.

19 You know the ones. The guy with the really bad hair
20 and the really loud voice and all the really cool special
21 effects.

22 But that's some people's notion of evangelism, are
23 these guys that have a really big hat and a whole lot of
24 cattle.

25 That's what an evangelist looks like, big car, big

1 jet airline, big production, big budget.

2 That's not the way Jesus said to do it. He's very
3 specific in these verses of what it is and what it isn't.

4 Evangelism gets a bad rap because of some of those
5 wolves and some of those charlatans that wear the wolf's
6 clothing.

7 Some of them. Not all of them. We are doing the
8 Luis Palau thing in a month, I'm really excited, it's going
9 to be awesome.

10 That's evangelism also, but it's based on what is
11 called friendship evangelism; that you don't just make the
12 sell and not bring them back to a community.

13 That's what Jesus is teaching as well, so it's
14 consistent with that.

15 But let's look at it closely, what it is and what it
16 isn't.

17 In Luke 10 evangelism is more of a meal than it is a
18 deal.

19 He's not trying to sell anybody a car. He's not
20 telling you you can go take this thing for a spin or kick the
21 tires.

22 It's around the table. He says whatever house you
23 enter, eat there.

24 Eat there. It's more a meal than it is a deal.

25 This has happened so many times in our lives and in

1 so many weird ways.

2 We went to Poland one year and I'll never forget
3 when this family welcomed in these American pastors into
4 their home and it was really hard to eat what they offered,
5 because the husband, he had emphysema or something, and he
6 was in horrible shape, and his wife was cooking in this
7 kitchen and you could smell everything, a little one room
8 house, and she's cooking up this stuff.

9 And one of guys in our group, there's four of us, I
10 guess, Pastor Wenda and I and two other people.

11 We could smell the stuff cooking and I was starting
12 to get sick. It was brutal.

13 And the one guy turns to Wenda and he goes, "I just
14 hope it's not liver."

15 What do you suppose it was?

16 It was liver, and liver is all this guy could
17 afford, and they brought it out and we kind of did the
18 Seinfeld thing of eating it and putting it in our pockets.

19 But, you see, a lot of people who call themselves
20 Christians, what they do when they go and have a meal with
21 somebody is they get real self-righteous about it and they
22 say something like I don't drink coffee. I'm off caffeine.
23 I'm healthy.

24 All of a sudden the person who offered it is like,
25 gee, what am I, chopped liver?

1 Or they come in and they say would you like a piece
2 of cake?

3 No, I've sworn off white sugar and so should you.

4 Do you want a beer?

5 No, I don't think alcohol.

6 Jesus says whatever they offer you, take it. He's
7 not saying to compromise your values.

8 If you have a chemical dependency problem and
9 somebody says do you want a glass of wine, you are not
10 supposed to say yes because the Lord told me I should have
11 one.

12 That would lead you to sin, not to peace, and this
13 is about the exchange of peace, and this is amazing that it
14 takes place over the dinner table, because in the ancient
15 tradition you had to put your weapons down to eat.

16 Literally you had to put your weapons down to eat.

17 It's interesting, we were at a convention in Fremont
18 this weekend all day Friday and all day Saturday and the
19 speaker was a guy named Harry Wendt, he's awesome, a guy from
20 Australia, I love the Australian accent, we used to live
21 there.

22 Harry is 72 years old and he has a world-wide Bible
23 study method.

24 He's a Lutheran pastor from Australia and he serves
25 32 countries and he teaches adult Bible studies.

1 He was talking about the story in the Bible when
2 Jesus is coming into Jericho and Zaccheas is there, you
3 remember, Zaccheas is a wee little man, a wee little man is
4 he, he is up in a sycamore tree and Jesus sees him and he
5 says I'm coming over to your house, and he does.

6 But what Professor Wendt taught us about that story,
7 when Jesus went to his house, he says you need to understand
8 the culture in Jericho, which he says the closest thing he
9 has seen in his life was in southeastern Turkey there is a
10 community of Bedouin shepherds that he had the privilege of
11 visiting.

12 He's teaching Bible study in this village, and the
13 Bedouins were actually Jewish people, but he's in their
14 community and he visited with them and he ate what they
15 provided for him.

16 But when they befriended him and invited him in, it
17 was a law that he had to stay for three and one-third days.

18 You don't just have a cup of coffee in that culture
19 and leave.

20 If somebody opens up their house and says come on
21 in, you're in for three and one-third days.

22 And he says the amazing thing was they told stories
23 in the village of when some people would come in and they
24 would be welcomed into one of these Bedouin communities, not
25 a bedroom community, B-E-D-O-U-I-N I think is the way it's

1 spelled, and they would welcome somebody in and literally if
2 the law enforcement officers from that area came and said,
3 okay, you guys have a fugitive in your family and we're here
4 to arrest them, the family that welcomed that person would
5 say you're not getting them for three and one-third days

6 And they said you don't understand, this is a
7 fugitive, this is a terrorist, this is whatever, we need to
8 come and take him away.

9 They would get their swords out and would fight to
10 the death to protect the person they had extended the table
11 to.

12 Amazing, isn't it?

13 So what they had to do is wait three and one-third
14 days.

15 In some parts of the culture it was three one-third
16 days, plus another three days, because the concept being if
17 they just had a meal after three days, it takes another three
18 days for that food to be totally digested and eliminated from
19 their bodies, so it was six and one-third days.

20 The point being when Jesus said to Zaccheas I'm
21 going to your house today, it wasn't for a cup of tea; it was
22 for a very lengthy conversation.

23 And, see, that's the deal with us. We are brought
24 into so much a fast food culture that we drive up and get it
25 and off we go.

1 I don't know how many people say we need to do lunch
2 or dinner sometime. We need to do this sometime, but we just
3 don't have time.

4 That's the enemy, because Jesus is very specific.
5 It's about being at the table together and putting your
6 weapons down that people will know the peace which passes all
7 understanding.

8 It's me. I'm the host. That's what we say in
9 communion.

10 But Jesus says take the show on the road. It's
11 about eating with people and it's not going in with an
12 agenda.

13 The agenda you go in with is peace; not warfare.
14 Not conversion, but conversation.

15 Peace, not agenda, and so this person of peace
16 strategy is not a sell.

17 I don't want you to buy Jesus and I have him all
18 neatly wrapped up for you.

19 It's self-disclosure. If you have been there for
20 three and one-third days, they are going to really see what
21 you're like.

22 They are going to go, okay, this guy gets up crabby
23 in the morning.

24 This guys goes to bed crabby at night. This guy has
25 some real character flaws. I don't know if I want to be like

1 this guy.

2 Jesus is saying if you go with peace, stay there,
3 eat what the offer, and stay there until you leave there, and
4 I'm not saying it was three and a half days in those days, it
5 may not have been, but it isn't a drive-by.

6 It isn't a, well, I don't drink coffee. It isn't a,
7 you should change the way your dietary habits are.

8 Because, you see, this is also a Kosher community,
9 and what Jesus is saying is revolutionary, because Jewish
10 people are not allowed to eat certain products.

11 Jesus, says that doesn't affect you any longer. Eat
12 what they give you. I don't care if it's a hot dog. That's
13 what he's talking about.

14 Kosher no longer exists, because I'm the host, is
15 what he's saying.

16 It's interesting. It's a great story. Radical
17 table fellowship.

18 There is an urgency, but not a desperation.

19 It's fascinating, too, because God wants success in
20 this more than we do.

21 It's his harvest, if you notice closely, but the
22 laborers are few, and he's not just talking about getting
23 more cable channels for guys that are up there with bad hair
24 preaching the gospel.

25 You take the meals and the mountains out of the

1 scriptures and it's a very short book.

2 And we're people at the table, I was ashamed, we had
3 our church council in our house a few weeks ago on a
4 Wednesday night one of the council member comes in and says,
5 "I've never been in your house."

6 I thought, "Oh, my gosh."

7 Then he goes, "I'm not saying that to put guilt on
8 you. I apologize. I'm not saying that. I've just never
9 been in your house."

10 "Have you ever been in any pastor's house?"

11 "No."

12 And then some people misinterpret that to say
13 effective pastors go around to everybody's house that's in
14 the flock, see?

15 That's not what Jesus says.

16 Everybody is supposed to be doing it, and don't take
17 it personally when they don't welcome you.

18 If they don't, shake the dust off your feet and go
19 in a different place.

20 But when you go there, go there with the right
21 intention, and the intention is peace. There is an urgency,
22 but not a desperation.

23 In other words, be quick, but don't hurry. Don't
24 just say I have a few minutes, let's get down and shovel it
25 in, I'm sure glad we did lunch finally.

1 long time and then that inadequacy thing comes in.

2 I'm small, the whole insignificant thing, I'm not
3 really very quick of faith.

4 He doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the
5 called.

6 And what he says is you're called. You're called to
7 be one of me, and to be one with me, and when we go, we don't
8 go with an agenda.

9 When we go to Europe, you could go over there with
10 an agenda, I could go over there and go you guys need to pull
11 your heads out and get air conditioning in these houses.
12 It's their country, their continent.

13 You guys, I wish you had American food over here.

14 See, what I've learned is when I go over there the
15 bed is not too short; I'm too tall.

16 The houses aren't too cold; I just need to put on a
17 sweater.

18 Because that's the peace that we are supposed to
19 travel with.

20 That's what Jesus says. It's not about you and
21 yours; it's about me and mine.

22 It's my harvest. Get out there with the agenda
23 being peace, not discord.

24 Peace is the agenda. When you go and you speak
25 peace, your peace will either rest on that house or it won't.

1 You know this. You have been around people and
2 you're kind of like, whoa, that's not a relationship I want
3 to develop. That's the Lord speaking to you.

4 But if you are in balance and you're listening, you
5 are going to see these people of peace out there, and you are
6 going to find them in the lobby of the church, you're going
7 to find them at Starbucks, at Clancy's.

8 You're going to find them at different places in
9 your neighborhoods and everything else.

10 You're like, whoa, this is somebody Jesus wants me
11 to eat with, but not to convert, have a conversation with,
12 and they will see and they will feel and they will taste
13 Jesus through you.

14 He's the host, you see. It's a beautiful passage,
15 isn't it?

16 And I need to say this, too, because a lot of people
17 think this is just about pastors.

18 I was ashamed we hadn't had all the council people
19 in our house before.

20 We just lost a dear neighbor this week. Jim Mueller
21 passed away and his funeral will be here Tuesday morning at
22 10:30.

23 I'm sad to say we never really had Jim and Lavern
24 over to our house until just a couple years ago and when we
25 did it was one of the more fun things we ever did in our

1 lives.

2 We sat on the back deck and Jim told those wonderful
3 stories, a 95 year old man, a person of peace. Now he's at
4 peace.

5 But what we learned from that is you have to look
6 beyond your own little self-interest and reach out to your
7 neighbors.

8 We love them. They are like parents to us. They
9 have been for twenty years.

10 But some people think it's just pastors that are
11 supposed to do evangelism. That's nonsense. It's a process.

12 And so we are called, we believe theologically this
13 happens through our baptism into Christ, we are called by a
14 new name and we are told to let your light so shine and all
15 that stuff.

16 But just because you take a bath in a car wash
17 doesn't make you a car.

18 And just because you sleep in a garage, does that
19 make you a car?

20 Because you sleep in a pew, does that make you a
21 Christian.

22 Because you are baptized, does that make you a
23 Christian?

24 No, that's not what Jesus says. He's talking about
25 the peace that passes all understanding, that he comes to

1 offer, that we need to embrace and marinate in all the time.

2 Not see it as just a church thing. He's talking
3 about a lifestyle issue here.

4 To be a Christian means to be Christ-like. Less of
5 me and more Jesus.

6 And so when we talk to people, we aren't trying to
7 get them to be like us, heaven forbid.

8 Wouldn't it be cool if they became more like Jesus?
9 And when they do, whoa, they might change us. Wouldn't that
10 be cool?

11 So I'm down towards the end of reading a cool book
12 on prayer right now, it's all about proximity, is really what
13 it's about.

14 Philip Yancey's book on prayer, I highly recommend
15 it to people.

16 It's about relationship and proximity, and we are in
17 this fast-paced thing and we just don't understand that
18 really God is at the table and he puts us to put another slot
19 at the table and bring people in so that they can have what
20 we have, if we have it, and he gives it to us, but do we
21 receive it and do we work with it?

22 Here is the deal. Don't take it personally if it
23 doesn't work.

24 There is a great verse at the end of this that talks
25 about whoever listens to you, listens to me; whoever rejects

1 you, rejects me; and whoever rejects me rejects the one who
2 sent me.

3 There are a lot of people who have rejected Jesus
4 and they sleep in pews, but don't take it personally.

5 What God wants for those people is table fellowship,
6 goes beyond coming in and getting communion twice a year.
7 That's sad.

8 He's the host with the most and he tells us go out
9 there and the people will be there, you'll find them.

10 It's amazing when you run into them. It's
11 fantastic.

12 I'll say it to Wenda now, we have been practicing,
13 what is the deal with that guy? I think he's a person of
14 peace. Oh, cool. We'll invest in that person.

15 That's somebody God wants to build his kingdom
16 around. That's somebody he wants to have people in his or
17 her home, cluster leader, up to seventy people.

18 And what do you do together? You do life together.
19 Wouldn't that be cool? That's the future. It's also the
20 past.

21 We have these wonderful kids that are getting ready
22 to go on a trip.

23 PASTOR WENDA: Mark, I had never thought of that
24 before about the person of peace being in this text today,
25 the agenda is peace and the goal is peace, and it's not

1 conversion, I've never thought about that, it's conversation,
2 and I had not seen that bit in there about the table.

3 We have some middle school people that are going to
4 be eating at a different table in Rapid City, South Dakota.

5 And they are five people that have chosen to take
6 one of their vacations and go to Sheffield, England, and the
7 food really isn't that great in England, but you'll have some
8 great table fellowship.

9 This is what happens when we go to our neighbor's
10 house, whether it's in Rapid City or England.

11 I mean, Jesus is clear on it. We eat what is put
12 before us.

13 So I am going to invite you guys to come up. We
14 want to bless you for that.

15 The other thing I was thinking about, Mark, is the
16 text that I'm sending you out like lambs among wolves, and I
17 don't really like the sound of that.

18 When we go out into the world, that's what Jesus
19 says is going to happen.

20 We are his lambs and it's going to be like going out
21 amongst wolves, and because of that, we need to cover one
22 another with prayer.

23 All these disciples have raised their own money to
24 cover the trip.

25 Lord, we praise you and we thank you for these

1 disciples. We know that we will learn much from them.

2 Today we learned from you, good teacher, about what
3 it means to go into the world, and even though we don't know
4 where in the world our faith will take us and what our
5 journeys will be like, the food we will eat, what kind of
6 people we will meet, you will be there.

7 You have promised us that where two or three of us
8 gather around the table you are there in our midst.

9 So we ask a mighty anointing upon these disciples
10 that will represent the family of Christ here at Bethany.

11 We praise you and thank you and we are so grateful
12 that we can be your family here at Bethany.

13 And all of Gods' disciples said Amen.

14 Would you encourage these people that are going into
15 the world?

16 (Applause)

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