

Why Are We Here?

Matthew 9:35—10:8

Introduction

As you can see, the color today is **green**, meaning that we are now in the season of **ORDINARY TIME** or the **SEASON AFTER PENTECOST**. It's the longest season of the year, lasting until the end of **November**, broken at the end of **October** by **REFORMATION SUNDAY** and **ALL SAINTS' DAY** on **November 1**. Is the color for this season green because that's a good spring and summer color? Well, sort of. **Green** is the color of **life** and **growth**. Every season of the year has an emphasis. The emphasis during Ordinary Time is the life and growth of the church. Every Sunday is a "mini-Easter", celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus. And the church is always to be about her mission. However, throughout the year, **celebration** and **mission** are emphasized at different times. From **ADVENT** to **PENTECOST** we are **celebrating** the various parts of the life of Christ. During the summer months, we focus on the **mission** of the church. This season began last week. We just didn't talk about it because it was also the **FESTIVAL OF THE TRINITY**. Remember, the **Gospel** lesson was the **Great Commission**. That shows we are entering the time of the emphasis on mission.

Rhythm of Jesus

This cycle of celebration and mission gives a **rhythm** to church life. When we think about rhythm, we see a rhythm or pattern to the way Jesus operates with His disciples as well.

Prayer

In **verses 37** and **38**, Jesus shows the disciples the need, people to work in the harvest field, that is, share the **Good News** of Jesus. Then, He tells them to **pray** to God that He would send people to fill the need.

Call

As soon as the disciples have a chance to pray for laborers, Jesus answers their prayer. He **calls** them. **Matthew** says that He *called them to Him* (**9:38**). He was placing a **call** upon their lives, giving them that vocation.

Authorize

The third step is to give them *authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and affliction* (**10:1**). He gave them the power to do the job He had called them to do. He **authorized** them. Jesus never sends anyone on a job unless He equips them for it.

Send

The last step of the pattern is to **send** them out, telling them what to do. He gave them a **message** to proclaim and a **mission** to perform. The message was the **Good News of the Kingdom of heaven** (7) and the mission was to **minister to the needs of the people, physical and spiritual** (8).

Our Rhythm

As mentioned earlier, our year has the rhythm of **celebration** and **mission**. Celebration gets us motivated and charged up to want to go out and do the work God has given us of sharing His Good News and ministering to the needs of others. Since the Greek word for “spirit” can also mean “breath”, you might even say we **inhale** the Spirit in celebration and **exhale** Him in mission. Let’s face it. If we want to live, we must inhale and exhale. The life of the church is built around these two poles. This is how the church lives, through celebration and mission. The current restrictions have taken away part of our celebration. Because of them, we now must figure out a new way to do our mission, or we won’t live. But the rhythm isn’t only annual, it’s weekly, as well.

Enter to Worship

In some churches, you will see this sign over the door of the sanctuary, *Enter to Worship—Depart to Serve*. That’s why we’re here, today, to worship. That’s obvious, but there’s more to it than that. What happens in worship? Two things—**we** minister to **God** and **He** ministers to **us**. We minister to Him through prayer, singing and giving of our offerings. He ministers to us with Absolution, His Word and Sacrament. That’s why it’s called a “Divine Service”, because of the work God does for us.

Depart to Serve

God doesn’t do all that for us just so we can enjoy ourselves or feel good. It’s like eating. Some live to eat. They just eat because they enjoy it. The way it’s supposed to work is that we eat to live. We don’t worship for worship’s sake; we worship to be built up to serve. Our life isn’t complete unless we put our faith into action. We worship to serve.

Means of Grace

As I said, God ministers to us in **WORD** and **SACRAMENT**. When we hear His **WORD** and eat His **SACRAMENT**, He forgives our sin and fills us with His **Spirit** to send us out to serve Him by sharing His **GOOD NEWS** with others. **THAT’S WHY WE’RE HERE.**

*May the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
