July 27, 2020 Devotional

Let us ponder these verses from the Gospel of Luke:

*“Jesus gave them (the disciples) power and authority and sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere*.” Luke 9:1,2,6.

Over the years I have heard positive stories about someone’s encounter with Christians and negative stories about these encounters. Such stories may be true or false. They may be accurate or exaggerated. The point is this – being a Christ-like example is important.

Our passage is about Jesus sending the disciples out into the world. He sent them out as his representatives to be role models, mentors, spiritual examples for others. Jesus sent them out to be channels of his grace and power. Jesus sent them out to witness to him.

Are you a Christian mentor? Are you a Christ-like example? You may not have thought of yourself in exactly this way, but the answer is yes. When we confess our faith in Christ as Lord and Savior and commit to follow him, we accept the responsibility of being a Christian example or model. Jesus expects us to influence others on his behalf. The world needs good role models.

As a role model, you need certain qualities. You need a willingness to be reachable and teachable. You need an ability to say you were wrong, but also have the ability to affirm when you are right. You need to have confidence that Christ has called you to be an example and that Christ will supply what you need for this witness. You need the willingness to take risks and make mistakes. You need the ability to forgive yourself, rather than allowing your humanness to crush you. You need to trust in and seek guidance, wisdom and strength from God. You need the confidence to know that God wants to use you and will use you for his glory. You don’t need to be perfect; you do need to show up for the job.

In our passage from Luke, after spending three years with his disciples, teaching them, leading them and mentoring them, Jesus sends them out on their first mission. They have observed and learned from Jesus. Now it’s their time. Jesus gives them power and authority over evil, they have power to cure disease, and he sends them out to do his work in the Kingdom of God. We read: “*They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.”*

Christian examples know they aren’t perfect, but sincerely believe that they are forgiven. As role models, we have overcome challenges in our lives. We have gained wisdom and knowledge. We are persons of good character. We are changed persons and are being changed into the like-ness of Christ. We are interested in others. We are willing to give and share. The Holy Spirit dwells within us. Our lives are committed to Christ and his mission.

Mentoring is a holy witness. We are asking God to help us to positively influence another person. We are asking God to work through us to help another person to grow in maturity. We are asking God to use the example of our lives to inspire another’s life. We are asking God to use our lives to bring others to him or to lead others to draw closer to God.

Conversely, I believe that no matter what our age, we too still need mentors, role models, examples for our lives. We need people we can imitate and admire. We need people who can challenge us to be more effective as Christ-like examples.

Proverbs 1:5 says: *“Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance.”* Proverbs 27:9 says*: “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel.”* Proverbs 13:20 says: *“One that walks with the wise grows wise; but a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

Thank God for giving you someone who has inspired you or is inspiring you. What one or two people have had the greatest impact on your life? Identify one key nugget of wisdom you have learned from them. I believe God wants you to use what you learned to help others.

Examples, role models still count today. Worthy examples still make a difference. Jesus calls us to speak up for him. Jesus calls us to be witnesses to his love and grace. Christ can use you to make a life-changing impact on others. Are you willing to be an example for those around you?

The Lord bless and keep you,

Rev. Alan W. Deuel