



## Introduction

*Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.*

## Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;**

**we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**

**so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

## Opening Hymn ELW # 634 / LBW # 328

*All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Prayer of the Day

God of the covenant, in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Ezekiel 2:1-5

*In 597 BCE, the priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Psalm: Psalm 123

- <sup>1</sup>To you I lift up my eyes, to you enthroned in the heavens.  
<sup>2</sup>**As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,  
and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,  
so our eyes look to you, O LORD our God,  
until you show us your mercy.**  
<sup>3</sup>Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy,  
for we have had more than enough of contempt,  
<sup>4</sup>**too much of the scorn of the indolent rich,  
and of the derision of the proud.**

## Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

*Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## **Gospel: Mark 6:1-13**

*At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim God's word and relieve affliction.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

### **Reflection on the Text**

Two by two, Jesus sent them. Have you ever wondered why? I mean, twelve people going to twelve places could have done so much more – twice the work, twice the healing, twice the converts, twice as many people receiving the word that the kingdom of God (or reign of God) was coming near, and they should repent!

We might think about Noah bringing the animals onto the Ark two by two, but that is for a slightly different reason. No, the sending of the twelve had deeper meaning. Humans are made to be in relationship to one another, to be companions to one another, to be in communion with one another, and to be accountable to one another.

We might wonder why these things matter, but in light of the earlier part of this text, we also see that humans can be mean and reject others – including those they know and profess to love. Jesus has just taught in the synagogue where he had grown up. At first, they were amazed at this teaching, but then they rejected it – not because it was wrong, or faulty, but simply because they could not believe it coming from someone they thought they knew. Jesus – the carpenter's son, whose mother Mary and his brothers and sisters still lived there – this one man who they had watched grow up could simply not be this wise, this Godly, this believable. Therefore, they rejected him.

Jesus was well aware that rejection would be one of the most difficult things his newly trained disciples would face. Long days, being hungry, sleeping rough – all of these things they had endured while traveling with Jesus, but they had never experienced out and out rejection. Oh, some of the temple leaders had criticized Jesus, but that was different – they criticized lots of people, including each other! But to be rejected by family and friends – those very people around whom you had lived and learned and grown up around – that kind of rejection is hard. Jesus knew that, and he knew that his disciples would face similar kinds of rejection during their first preaching tour.

So, Jesus sends them two by two – not just for companionship, but so that they could lift one another up when it was needed. Yes, they held one another accountable, as we do for each other, but they also had that unspoken role of keeping one another going. Itinerant preachers were not all that uncommon, and many of them were used to rejection, but these were not just any itinerant preachers – these were the chosen ones – the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus to be his inner circle. These twelve were the ones to which Jesus explained his parables; these are the ones sent to preach to others. The other followers of Jesus most likely stayed with him while the twelve were sent out.

This is the way of the church, as well. We are called and sent. We are given the Word of God to take to others. We are called to hold one another accountable. We are called to encourage one another as we live our lives, as we share the word of God, and as we face the difficulties of life – including family and rejection.

We are not called to stand up for ourselves alone, but to stand up for one another. We are not called to be responsible only to ourselves, but to God and to one another. We are not called to be miserable by ourselves, but to lean on one another, to lift up one another and to encourage one another in times of need.

There is much talk these days of “my rights,” or “this is what I have done,” or “this is what I deserve.” The reality is that none of these are true. These rights belong to all of us, equally. Anything that we have or have done is a gift from God. And fortunately, we never get what we deserve, because we are all sinners who fall short of the glory of God and deserve only condemnation. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God, who are called to love one another, to hold one another accountable, and to lift one another up in times of need.

Jesus sent them two by two so that they would always have a companion. We are called to be the body of Christ, to be present for one another, to share our stories of faith, to lift the fallen, to care for those in need, and to share the love of God with all. Amen.

## **Hymn of the Day ELW # 742 / LBW # 439**

### *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## **Apostles' Creed**

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

*A brief silence.*

God of all, through the waters of baptism you claim people of all races, ethnicities, and languages as your beloved children. Sustain the baptized and increase their faith, that your gospel may be proclaimed throughout the earth.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the heavens, your creating Spirit animates the universe. We give you thanks for the moon and stars, for the planets and the Milky Way Galaxy, and for all of the mysteries of the cosmos that remain unknown to us.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of freedom, you have liberated us from sin and death and rescue us from all forms of spiritual, social, and political oppression. Defend us from tyrants in our midst and deliver us from all forms of slavery or corruption. Direct our freedom for works of liberation and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of compassion, you became vulnerable in the person of Jesus Christ in solidarity with the disempowered. Strengthen those who feel faint, give courage to those who fear, and bring wholeness to those in need, especially those we name now.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of holiness, you send us out into the world to proclaim your love. We pray for local outreach ministries. Equip us as we leave this place to witness and serve our neighbors.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of comfort, we pray for those who are affected by extremes of weather, including flooding, drought, and extreme heat. We also pray for those affected by the recent building collapse in Florida. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks that in every time and place you call forth prophets who move us towards freedom. Thank you for those who work for human rights, community organizers, and all who strive for liberty for all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # 888**

*Oh, Beautiful for Spacious Skies*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.