

Chris Murphy  
August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Luke 10: 1-12  
Sermon Title: Mission Possible

Prayer...

Introduction:

Summer Movie Season: So far I have seen four movies- Indiana Jones, Mission Impossible, Barbie, and Oppenheimer (Barbenheimer). I look for the sacred when I watch movies. (I don't view them as secular movies, but look for the sacred)

Here are my brief reviews:

Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny- Great for those that enjoy Harrison Ford. Fun action. Thoughtful and heartwarming ending.

Mission Impossible- Dead Reckoning Part 1. Fun action. Great for Tom Cruise fans. Especially fun to see the crazy stunt where he rides a motorcycle off a cliff and then parachutes eventually to safety.

Awesome.

Barbie- Fun and humorous satirical take on Barbie and Ken with a helpful critique of patriarchy and a reflection on feminism and masculinity in a lighthearted way. I am a fan of the band Indigo Girls and they sing a song called Closer I am to Find during the movie. So like that as well.

Oppenheimer- A deep and interesting story of the father of the Atomic Bomb, J. Robert Oppenheimer. Interesting emotional journey through the struggle of World War II, and the ethical dilemma of creating a bomb that would open the door eventually to the nuclear arms race and the possibility of humanity being able to destroy itself and our planet.

Movies have a way of giving us an escape, while also inviting us explore the complexity of what it means to be human. I decided today to have the title of our sermon be a play on the mission impossible movies.

Today, we will explore Christ's mission of the kingdom of God, shown in

the mission of the 72. We might consider our invitation to follow Jesus and serve him as Mission Possible.

In our Scripture story today, we continue our focus on pilgrimage with Jesus by looking at the mission of Jesus sending out 72 of his followers. Jesus decided at some point in his ministry to delegate and send out his followers to do the ministry he did. I want to highlight a few of the details of this ministry.

- The Harvest is Plentiful, but the laborers are few. How many of us are willing to be peacemakers and to spread the love of Jesus to the world? Many people are struggling through life and need someone to introduce them to the way of Jesus, the kingdom life of love, peace, and justice.
- Focus on the Kingdom of God: Healings, casting out demons, bringing peace to people.

I love the emphasis of peace or shalom. Peace offered to others. If received well, would be offered to homes. If resisted, the peace returned to the followers of Jesus.

- Mission of Seventy two people. Jesus sent them out sent in teams of two. Not about individual ministry by team ministry.

Implications for our ministry:

We need to serve together. This prevents burnout. It also is simply more effective. As pastor, my job is to help equip us to live out our faith in ministry and to effectively use our gifts for the kingdom of God in the world. Our job is to be aware of our gifts and offer them in whatever way we can and desire to help the mission of Christ in the world both through our church and through other ways, possibly our work/vocation, through relationships, and through other causes. Our lives have purpose and we are to discover our gifts and use them for the kingdom, not as lone rangers, but as partners in ministry.

More thoughts on Kingdom Ministry:

Shalom: the work of peacemaking, bridge building, compassion, healing, social justice which refers to addressing problems in society like making sure education is available to all, addressing the need for adequate housing, when needed addressing issues of injustice like racism or other forms of prejudice. Wherever society needs improvement like the health of our prison system or equality in the workforce. Or the need to reduce fossil fuels and live more sustainably with God's creation. These actions are part of social justice and are an important aspect of the kingdom of God.

The mission of the kingdom also involves inviting people to a relationship with God through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Teaching people to pray is part of the mission of the kingdom.

The focus on peace in this story of the seventy two reminds me of our church's new emphasis on peace through our Peace Garden. If you go to the Newberg Peace Garden Facebook page, you will see are creating

a portion of the garden that will include a Ginkgo tree that's seed is originally from Hiroshima Japan. This tree and the peace poles surrounding it will speak to our desire to foster peace rather than violence in the world as we remember the pain caused by the Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Japan.

Peacemaking is such an important part of our ministry at Newberg First Presbyterian. At our First Friday prayer retreats we cultivate peace as we pray together and share in what I like to call contemplative community. The Peace Garden is a place of rest and renewal that we enjoy on these retreats and that we offer the community of Newberg, which need places that embody the values of peace and love.

On this communion Sunday, may we embrace our mission as followers of Jesus who are sent out together to embody the kingdom of God in our world. May people sense that the kingdom is near when they walk on our church campus or meet us in our workplaces and towns. The mission of the kingdom is the mission of love, peace, and justice in a

world that is hungry for authentic people who know God's love and are willing to show it to others without judgment. This mission of the kingdom is not impossible. No, it is possible with the grace of Jesus helping us to faithfully follow him to support people in need. Those people could be within your own family, or your neighbors, or someone who is hungry and without resources like a stable home or job. May people know we are followers of Jesus because the love we show and the love we receive in Christ. May we glorify Christ in all we do. Amen and Amen.

Luke 10:1-12

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ 6 And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’[b] 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’[c] 12 I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.