

**July 4, 2010 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**The Reverend Canon Charles M. Davis, Jr.**

### **Sending Out**

Part of the vows taken in Baptism is to be evangelist; that is part of our vocation as Christians. “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?” (Book of Common Prayer, page 306) I wish that we did it better. We have too often not proclaimed, because we don’t want to be seen as being tacky. Too often we have thought that Sunday fulfills the obligation of our faith. I am here to tell you that you are called to be evangelist. That does not mean you need to have a Bible and go out in front of the State House, but it does mean that you, through word and deed, are called to proclaim the truth of God’s love in your life. It should be the center of your work, your family, your play, your vacation. What did Jesus do through you this week? Was anybody’s life changed or touched; was anybody healed; was anybody forgiven; does anybody know about God’s love because you told it to them this week?

I hear in this Gospel about the sending out of the seventy a clear mandate to minister in the name of Jesus Christ. I hear in this Gospel a clear reminder that we need each other to be able to do that. I believe that Jesus knew and knows that without each other we are lost. And I also hear in this Gospel the truth that we are called to be disciples carrying the Good News of Jesus Christ to a broken world. We are the ones being sent out - you and me. This is not just the work of the clergy. It is the work that you were baptized for.

God has given us each other. We need each other. That understanding is at the heart of the reason that I am an Anglican, an

Episcopalian. I believe that it is through the differences we share that God is revealed. What I bring to the conversation and what you bring allows God to be revealed. It is not in our sameness that God is revealed but in our different-ness. Maybe I make too much of this sending out two by two, but for me it is a clear reminder that we need each other, we need each other in worship, in prayer, in study, and in mission and ministry. That is the reason we are called to live in community. It is the reason we have this church: not so we have a place to go on Sundays, but because we know how much we need each other; how much we need to gather together week by week by week.

I have had the great pleasure and privilege to teach a Bible study on Tuesday mornings. It has become a great source of strength for me. The men who come are faithful. They come not because of some great theological wisdom that the person who leads it has; they don't come because they all agree. They don't come because they even like each other. They do come because they love each other. They come because in the midst of our time together God's Spirit allows us to hear and know together. They come because we study and share and pray together. They come because they understand that we would be less without each other. They come because in the midst of our time God is present. It is no different for us this morning. That understanding is the center of this celebration. It is the heart of our call, the call of our Baptismal covenant, that we know God in and through each other. In this morning's Gospel, Jesus is sending out the seventy, two by two. There was great intention in sending them out in pairs. Jesus, in this simple act, reminds them of their need for each other.

He also tells them and us, in this Gospel, there is much work to be done and you have everything that you need to do the work. He reminds

them and us of some of the basics; things that my mother taught me when I went out. And things that I find myself doing with my children. Coleman, be careful! There are mean people out there. Bad things go on. Call me when you get there. Sara, it will not be a long trip. You don't need everything that you own. Just carry what you need, not a hole bunch of extra stuff. We are only going to be gone for two days; you don't need a suitcase that big. When you go to someone's house and they serve dinner, eat what they serve. Don't tell them you don't like it, and if you don't like it eat a little bit anyway. If you are not welcome some place it is their loss, so go on and don't worry about those people. This is all just common sense. But the disciples seem to listen and they do what Jesus asks and when they come back they are astonished at the work of God that got done. They are amazed at what God could do through them when they opened their hearts and sought to do his work.

Jesus, in this morning's Gospel, is sending out. He sends out his disciples to minister. He sends them out to proclaim. He sends them out to prepare. He sends them out to heal, restore. He sends them out in his name. But if this is just a story about what Jesus did and not what he is doing then I think we miss the point. Because Jesus still sends out his disciples. He sends you out today with the same expectations. He sends you out with the same command. You are not to leave here this morning thinking that you have done what you are supposed to do as a Christian just by showing up. If you leave here today with the expectation that you have fulfilled your duty to God for a week and now you can have the week off, then you have missed why you are here. Jesus is sending you through those doors this morning with the same expectation with which he sent out the seventy. I think it

would be wonderful if next Sunday you come back here with the stories of the successes and failures of your ministry.

God's call is for you to proclaim. God's call is for you to be the bearer of his Good News. Go forth from this place to proclaim the truth of his love in your life. Bear witness that the world is changed because of his love for you.