

Pentecost 2 – June 14, 2020
Text: Matthew 9:35 – 10:8
Theme: No Free Lunch

There is NO FREE LUNCH! We are all very familiar with this saying. And, in a sense, it is true. Somebody, somewhere has to pay for everything either with currency or toil. When parents tell their children they cannot afford something, I often hear the child say,

"Just put it on your Visa!"

"Of course!" says the parent, "How stupid of me to forget that I have this little piece of plastic that I can show to a merchant and get anything I want for free!"

I am not sure when, chronologically speaking, a person begins to realize that there is no free lunch. Some of you parents would probably argue for around 55. But I think one begins to grapple with the idea of paying for one's own lunch sometime around Middle School, and it is a growth process from there on. Eventually you discovered that EVERYTHING has a price. I think that it is then that we can become very cynical in regard to anything for free.

The disciples were little different from us. They were business men, fishermen, tax collectors etc. They knew that there was no free lunch. So it must have come as a surprise when the Lord sent them out and told them to go out and heal the sick, raise the dead,

cleanse the lepers and drive out demons but do not take along any money or extra clothes. In other words, go out and freely give what you have been freely given and let the Lord worry about the details.

Can you imagine the trust that it took for them to do this? Just go out and share the good news in word and action and believe that God will take care of the rest. That does not fit in with the concept of "no free lunch." It completely goes against the human idea that God helps those who help themselves (and no, that is not anywhere in the Bible). Just go out and give away for free what God has given to you.

The disciples might have considered the fact that people would not take seriously anything that was free. You get what you pay for and if it is free then it is either worthless or there is a catch. And that is sadly very true of the world. But God warns us in Isaiah:

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Is. 55:8-9)

But, knowing human nature, I bet the thought that really crossed the disciples mind was this. "Why are we GIVING AWAY

all of this great stuff?" There was a great deal of money to be made on healing the sick and raising the dead. And remember that the disciples were still pretty confused as to what all of this "kingdom of heaven being near" stuff was all about. But, if that meant no more Rome, and an autonomous nation of Israel again, that would be worth a pretty penny as well, and they would be the princes of this new kingdom that their Lord was about to set up. However, instead of a wise marketing plan, the Lord sent them out penniless and expected them to return the same, having given away all that great stuff.

An old proverb says "All we can hold in our cold dead hands is what we have given away." God so often turns all the rules upside down for us. The least shall be greatest. The meek shall inherit the earth. The last shall be first. Go out into the world and give freely because you have received freely. All of the gifts that Jesus gave to his disciples were given for one purpose, that the gospel might be spread, that people might listen to them and see their actions and be brought to faith. Outside of that they had no purpose.

What is your purpose on this earth? Does anyone think so highly of himself as to for even a moment think he deserves what he has? Why did God give you whatever gifts and abilities you

have? St. Peter wrote, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." Our one job is to glorify God in all that we do, in all that we are, and that is where we will find contentment and peace in this world.

An old pastor once said that in all the deathbeds over which he had stood, he never once heard the dying person whisper, "I just wish I had spent a few more hours at the office," or "if only I had invested more money in the market." Sadly, what many people are whispering as they die is that they wish they had spent time with their spouse, their children and their grandchildren, or that they wish they had done more to serve God and their fellow man, or that they wish they had loved more and criticized less or that they wish they had prepared themselves better to meet the Almighty.

We are all gifted. We are gifted in different ways for different reasons. Some of us have wealth. Some of us have time. Some of us have specific talents. These gifts were not given purely for our enjoyment. They were given by God to serve the Gospel. Even the gift of faith in Christ which results in eternal life was given freely.

Well, not exactly freely. Because, you see, there really is no free lunch. Someone paid for that gift. God died for that gift. God, in the person of Christ, suffered the tortures of Hell so that we

could have salvation and all of his other wonderful gifts. Jesus knew that he would be going to the cross even when human beings were still in the Garden of Eden sewing fig leaves together and hiding in the woods.

Now he comes to us through the waters of Baptism and the power of the Word, the one who gave up his life, his very body and blood and in fact still gives his very body and blood for the strengthening and nourishment of our faith. He comes to us and says freely you have received, now freely give.

What shall we do? Everything we have is a gift, every penny, every ability, every breath we take. We are gifted so that we may serve God by giving. And when we die, our cold dead hands will hold nothing but what we have given, the love, the time, the money, the effort, the witness to the work of our Lord and all of the souls whom the Holy Spirit has touched through us.