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St. Luke, Evangelist (transferred)

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“Peace Be With You”
Text: Luke 10:1-9

Peace be with you.

That’s what those seventy-two who went out ahead of Jesus were to say. They were to proclaim peace, for that is what our Lord wants to give us: *peace*.

Because that is what sin has stolen from us. Because of sin we have strife, not peace, with others; we have separation, not peace, with God; and we have doubts, not peace, in our hearts. And no matter how hard we try, we cannot fix any of this. Our situation is like the dam that has sprung a leak, that the little boy comes along and sticks his finger in the hole and stops the leak. We may breathe easier for a while, but it is not long before another leak begins, and then another and another and another. And not only do we run out of fingers, we know it will not be long before the whole dam gives way and we are drowned in a flood of sin and evil.

In fact, that has already happened. For when our first parents sinned in the Garden of Eden, it was not just a little leak that happened that day, the whole dam came down! Sin and death rushed into the world and robbed Adam and Eve of their peace. For now their hearts were heavy with doubt and condemnation, they ran and hid from God, and they blamed each other. Paradise came tumbling down, and our world with it. The peaceful Garden had become . . . well, what we see today: a world full of wolves.

And you are no innocent victim. Neither am I. We too play the wolf, perhaps more often than we care to admit. Devouring reputations, chewing out loved ones, bearing our fangs to get what we want, laying in wait to pounce on our prey. We may wear sheep’s clothing on the outside, but our thoughts, words, deeds, and desires betray who we really are, don’t they?

Peace be with you. It is what we need.

And so how wondrous, then, when our peace came. That night - *St. Luke the Evangelist tells us* - when the angels were so filled with joy and awe that they could not remain silent, but raised their voices and proclaimed to the shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night: ***Glory to God in the highest and on earth*** - what? ***Peace, goodwill toward man.*** (Luke 2:14) For the One to re-establish our peace had come, and was now wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in

a manger.

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) The Lamb who came to be devoured by the wolf named satan; to be devoured in our place. To place His sinless body into the jaws of sin and death and be chewed up for you. And as we look upon the cross, that is what we see: the teeth marks of sin and the fangs of death.

Yet from that place of strife and sacrifice came life and peace. Life and peace in the forgiveness of our sin. For in being devoured by our sin and death Jesus has, in reality, devoured it! And so on the third day we see Him not devoured, but alive. And when He appears to His frightened disciples that night, what are the first words out of His mouth? **Peace be with you.** (John 20:19) He knows they need it. To know that their sin is forgiven. To know that death has been defeated. To know that the hound of hell has been rendered toothless. And so live in peace. The peace of God. The peace which passes all understanding. (Phil 4:7)

And that peace Jesus has sent here for you. For just as He sent those seventy-two, so He continues to send undershepherds to proclaim: **Peace be with you.** And what they are sent to **say** they are also sent to **do**: *to give that peace.* To heal those sick with sin through the water of Holy Baptism. That you not be drowned in the flood of sin and death, but instead that the sin and death in you be drowned in the flood of Jesus' blood which washes you clean and makes lambs out of wolves. That you be children of God, at peace with your Father who is in heaven, and at peace with one another.

Jesus sent those seventy-two out with nothing but what they needed. And what they needed, He gave them. And so it is not with moneybag, knapsack, sandals, or friends that they go, but only with His Word. And that is what we have today, and it is enough. For His Word of forgiveness, His Word joined to the water of Holy Baptism, and His Word connected to the bread and wine of His Holy Supper, give us what we need the most: life and peace. And even if we find ourselves surrounded by wolves, what Jesus gives they cannot take away. For as we will soon sing in Luther's great hymn: *"And take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife, though these all be gone, our vict'ry has been won, the kingdom ours remaineth."* (LSB #656) For the kingdom of God has come to you, in Jesus.

So that we may know this peace, St. Luke wrote the Gospel that bears his name. He was a physician of the body that Jesus called to be the physician of His body, the Church, that we may be healed. And by this Word you are healed, what has been stolen has been restored, and His peace now rests upon you. So have no fear, little flock. You have the Lamb, and the Lamb has you.

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.