



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

July 24, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

7th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [1 Kings 17:1-16](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 66

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Philippians 4:10-20](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 10:1-12, 16-20](#)

The Believer Follows Christ... Followers of Christ Support Kingdom Work Spread the Gospel in and out, here and there

1. Be full and content in the Lord.
2. Fill up others in the Lord.
3. Support the spread of the Gospel.
4. Help spread the Gospel.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

When we lived in China, we did a lot of shopping at iKee. At first we couldn't shop too much at iKee because the closest iKee was in Shanghai, which was about three hours away, but then they built one in our small city of 9-million people. They finally built an iKee and it was way out there and we could go there and they would ship things to our house. If you know iKee and any of the things you buy there, there is a lot of good stuff and they're not too hard to put together. If you've ever seen some of the pictures of the furniture, sometimes there is a picture right away of these two little stick figures. Maybe you've seen that on some of the furniture or things you put together. What does that mean? This is a project for two people. You might open a bookshelf or a table or something and you're like "I got this." Have you ever done that? You have this project and you know it's a two-person project but you say, "I can handle it."

If you've ever had to move a big couch, you might say "I got this." But have you ever noticed, if you have a spouse/wife or even a friend or neighbor that can help you do that, how much easier it is to do that project with just one more person. Or think just of hanging pictures. I despise hanging pictures by myself because I put it up there and look and I don't know if it's straight. But if you put it up there and have another hand, you can measure and doing that together is much easier when you have someone else

to help you and for support, but what type of people are we most often? We're pretty stubborn and we want to do these projects all by ourselves.

There are a lot of things in our life that are that way, where we are kind of stubborn. We don't want to get that support and help that we need even though there are many people who want to help and do that.

When we look at Paul and what he writes about, he is actually thanking the Philippians for the support and help that they have given. As we look at the text, we want to see how we **spread the Gospel in and out, and here and there**; how we can further the work of the Kingdom.

As Paul writes, he begins talking about some different things. He speaks first about something that makes you wonder, *why is he talking about this content thing?* When he writes at the beginning, he says ***"I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."*** He speaks about being content because he is going to be filled up. God wants us to be full and content in the Lord.

For Paul, he had traveled to many different places. He speaks in Philippians about being so thankful. That's one of the reasons why he wrote it. He talks about rejoicing. Philippians is all about thanks and rejoicing in what the Lord has done. Here specifically he is rejoicing in how the Philippians have supported him. They have filled him up to be fulfilled and content in the Lord. As they have done that, he is able to go on and do his ministry.

For them and for Paul, he was filled up and supported in different ways. He speaks about how not many other churches have done this. It says in Verse 14: ***"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only."*** He allowed himself to be filled up by others; to know what they could give him and to support him and to not just be alone. He says he knows what it's like, in Verses 11 and 12. ***"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*** He has been filled up and he is content with what they have given, mostly because he is content with the Lord. He is content knowing that God will provide for him even if he is hungry. Even if he is in need, the Lord will provide; much like He did for Elijah even when things were difficult.

We can be filled up with the Lord and as he says, "you shared in my troubles." That's something we struggle with as Christians just in the same way as putting together that furniture that is a two-person job. We're so hesitant to let others share in our troubles, to let others fill us up. So we need to let others fill us up in the Lord so that we can be content in the Lord. If I'm not letting others share the Gospel and share their resources, maybe I'm going to complain and struggle with what I have, or just point out how "this is wrong and this is wrong." We need to let others fill us up.

But another part of his encouragement is encouraging others to fill up others in the Lord. We know that Paul has let others fill him up, but to know that our duty is to also fill others up. What does that look like? For the Philippians it was with sharing in finances. But I also wonder when he talks about troubles if that is also allowing him to share his struggles and to actually be open and honest and to admit where he has doubts and to allow them to pray for him; to help him in things that maybe he feels weak in; to support him in all these different instances.

Paul is encouraging the Philippians and us to keep on doing the things we know we want to do, but sometimes we're reserved. "Do they really need my help?" We think about this in the Gospel ministry, but I think you can think about this just with your brothers and sisters in Christ, too. After church we ask, "How are you doing?" In those few minutes after church, how honest do you think people are going to be with you? They probably say "Fine." Maybe like last week, they will say "Busy." But think about those times when you can actually talk more in depth. Sometimes you need to have a conversation for five or ten minutes with someone before they are really honest and open and share something that is really on their mind. So how does that happen? How do we support others? And how can we be filled up with others in Jesus if we're not spending that time with others, if we're not spending time with other Christians and sharing our struggles? We want to be filled up in Christ and His Word and to be content with what we have, but we also want to seek to fill up each other.

I think a really good picture of this is your phone. If you are using your phone throughout the day, what happens? The energy gets low, the power goes down, and finally, it's dead. So what do you have to do? You have to plug it back in. You have to plug it in and get it powered back up, to get filled back up. Think about that. If I want to fill up others in Jesus, what is the only way that I can do that? It's if I'm being filled up and if I know what it's like to be content and to speak spiritually as well, and to not be complaining or struggling with my life.

An important thing in this though is to not say you have to be perfect or you have to have everything figured out in order to help someone else. That's not it at all. If that were true, who could help someone else—no one. We're all imperfect. We're all falling short. But that doesn't mean we can't help because when I am filled up, I can share with others how God has helped me in those situations and maybe others can see that.

One of the biggest ways that Paul talks about here in supporting others is by supporting the spread of the Gospel. He speaks about it in Verse 17: ***“Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”*** What Paul is encouraging is that supporting of the Gospel. Supporting the spread of the Gospel in different ways, but here, specifically, supporting through finances.

I think it's good to point out the finances. It's one way that we can support in many ways, but I like to think about when we talk about time, talents and treasures. Talents has that multiple meaning. Sometimes it's mixed with treasures. Talents was a type of money, but you can support the Gospel ministry in so many gifts of service.

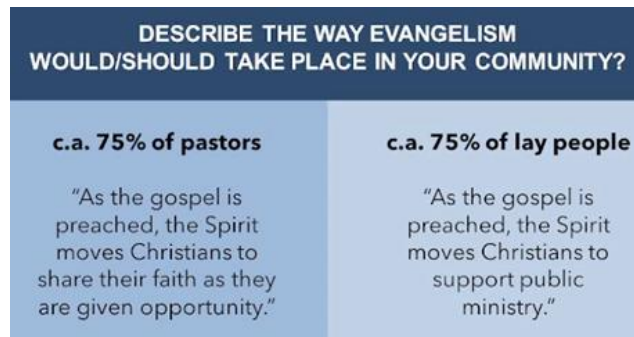
I look at this congregation and the blessings we have of all the gifted and talented people who serve in many different ways to further the Gospel. There are farmers who, again last night I had the experience of a farmer who can do just about anything to help out and to fix things that other people can't fix. We have people who are blessed with woodworking that design and make things that spread the Gospel. They support this spread of the Gospel with their gifts and talents, not only with the money, but also they help spread the Gospel. You can do that with your gifts, your talents, but to do so in so many ways. You can do so with what God has given you as we share that Gospel with what He has made you and how He has made you unique and different.

God asks us to be a part of that Gospel ministry, but I think often things get mixed a little bit. We know we have gifts and talents to serve. I pointed out some of those examples—people who are gifted in woodworking or music or fixing things. But often I think we don't see that as a part of the work or more than that, we think “Only the pastors can spread the Gospel. We pay them. We support them. We help them. And that's the work that they do.”

I'm going to show this little survey that was done. It was asking different ways that people think that mission work is carried out. First they asked pastors to describe the way evangelism would/should take place in your community? Seventy-five (75%) percent of pastors said “As the Gospel is preached, the Spirit moves Christians to share their faith as they are given opportunity.” So pastors are saying, “How does the Gospel spread? How does the Gospel go out into the world? When Christians share their faith.”

Then they asked the Christians (lay members) that the people are talking about. Seventy-five (75%) percent of those Christians said, “As the Gospel is preached, the Spirit moves Christians to support public ministry.” Do you notice something there? The

pastors are saying the Gospel is spread when pastors and called workers help, encourage and equip the church to go and share the Gospel. Most members are saying the Gospel is spread when we support the pastors. So the pastors are looking at the members to say it's their work, and the members are looking at the pastors and saying it's the work of the pastors.



So what is the answer? It's a little bit of both, but I think this helps us understand where some of the problems are, in this next one here.



They surveyed people in the congregation and said, "Are you involved in your congregation's evangelism efforts?" Seventy-one (71%) percent of the people said yes. But then they asked, "In the past 12 months, with how many people did you attempt to share your faith in (or invite to church)?" It says 83% of people said they've not shared the Gospel or invited zero people to church. Then a few more, 13% said they've invited 1-2 people. So 71% of the people say they're involved in Gospel ministry, but they aren't sharing the Gospel. So what are they doing? They are involved. They are helping. They are doing things behind the scenes. They are supporting schools. They are helping with the things behind the scenes. Yes, that is important. That is good work. But what happens is the pastors and the called workers say "Our job is to equip the people" and the people are saying "We support the pastors to go do the work." Who is doing the work? Who is going out and sharing the Gospel?

As we share the Gospel and are encouraged to support the Gospel, I think we look to that Gospel Lesson where Jesus sends out the disciples. But before He sent out the 72,

He also sent out the disciples. And before He sent out the disciples, do you remember what He told them to pray for? He said ***“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers...”*** Then He sent them. He said, “You are praying and YOU are the answer to your prayers.”

In all of this, what is important is the pastors want to be doing the work of the Gospel, and we’re so thankful for every way that you share the Gospel. If that is supporting through money, if that’s supporting through your gifts and talents, or if it’s sharing about Jesus to others, witnessing and inviting them to church, sharing about your Savior in your daily life.

But I want to emphasize one more thing about why it’s important to help spread the Gospel, to be involved in that mission. I’m going to show a short, little video that talks about leaders and followers and how you get people involved. It’s one of my favorite clips I saw many years ago. See if you can see how it’s important and why it’s important to be involved in sharing the Gospel and how that gets others involved. It’s going to talk about a leader and then a first follower and then how there are more followers after that. ([Click here to watch video](https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement?language=en) or go to: https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement?language=en)

So ladies and gentlemen, at TED we talk a lot about leadership and how to make a movement. So let’s watch a movement happen, start to finish, in under three minutes and dissect some lessons from it.

First of course, you know a leader needs the guts to stand out and be ridiculed. But what he is doing is so easy to follow. So here is his first follower with a crucial role. He is going to show everyone else how to follow. Notice that the leader embraces him as an equal, so now it’s not about the leader anymore. It’s about them, plural. There he is, calling to his friends. If you notice, the first follower is actually an underestimated form of leadership in itself. It takes guts to stand out like that. The first follower is what transforms a lone nut into a leader.

And here comes a second follower. Now it’s not a lone nut, it’s not two nuts, three is a crowd and a crowd is news. So a movement must be public. It’s important to show not just the leader but the followers because you find that new followers emulate the followers, not the leader.

Now here come two more people and immediately after, three more people. Now we’ve got momentum. This is the tipping point. Now we’ve got a movement. So notice that as more people join in, it’s less risky. So those that were sitting on the fence before now have no reason not to. They won’t stand out. They won’t be ridiculed. But they will be part of the in crowd if they hurry.

Over the next minute, you'll see all of those that prefer to stick with the crowd because eventually they would be ridiculed for not joining in, and that's how you make a movement.

But, let's recap some lessons from this. First, if you are the type like the shirtless dancing guy that is standing alone, remember the importance of nurturing your first few followers as equals so it's clearly about the movement, not you.

We might have missed the real lesson here. The biggest lesson, if you noticed, did you catch it, is that leadership is over-glorified. Yes, it was the shirtless guy who was first, and he'll get all the credit, but it was really the first follower that transformed the lone nut into a leader. So, as we're told that we should all be leaders, that would be really ineffective. If you really care about starting a movement, have the courage to follow and show others how to follow. And when you find a lone nut doing something great, have the guts to be the first one to stand up and join in, and what a perfect place to do that, at TED. Thanks.

So a way to practically apply that, when we have Bible study, when we have church, how do you think people feel when the pastor is the one who invites them? Or even just sharing the Gospel; a lot of people say "Oh, you're a pastor." And they go "Ugh, you're calling me or you're talking to me because I haven't been to church." But what about when you go up and invite them and you say "Hey, I'm going to go to this Bible study. Would you like to come along with me?" Think about that and the picture of it being one person and then that second person and then more when you're saying "I'm going to this, would you like to come along with me?"

When we support the Gospel ministry, it's such a blessing to do that and to support the leaders; to support those who are going out to share the Gospel. But in the same way as a pastor, who goes about to do the work, it's often like that picture with the furniture with the two people. It's not something I can do alone. It's not something where the called workers are saying "Yeah, I want to go do this by myself." We're saying "This is what we get to do together and we want to support and encourage you as well."

As you go out and as you are those people who join and bring others along and help them to feel comfortable, and when you bring someone to church or invite them to Bible study to encourage discussion and encourage them to ask about questions that they have, if you don't have all the answers, that's okay. Say "Pastor, I brought this friend and they have this question. What do you think? How can I help them? Would you like to talk with them more?" To have all of these other people to be sharing the Gospel, and notice how it switches a little bit then too.

You work and spread the Gospel, but then what about the blessings of the pastor getting to spread and support the Gospel by supporting you? We do this all together.

On Sunday mornings and the last Saturday of the month, we're talking about this seminar, Partnering in the Gospel. We focus on how we work together, how we're all a part of this mission. And why is that—because God has loved and forgiven each one of us. We're loved and redeemed and we want everyone to know that. It's not that some are better at this than others. Yes, we call some. Yes, we have the ministry of the Gospel. But every Christian is enabled and empowered to do this work; to know that we are sinners but we're loved and redeemed and how much we want others to know of that Gospel and peace and to be, just like in that picture, in that crowd that is celebrating and joyful because we know the forgiveness and have shared that with others and can join in that celebration of forgiveness.

So be filled up in the Lord. Be content in what we have because we have our Lord and we know that He will provide what we need. He tells us He'll give us the strength to do all these things. In Verse 13: Not that we can do ANYTHING, as it's often misused, but we can do this—we can share the Gospel. We can be content because the Lord is the Savior and He'll enable us and empower us to support the ministry and help spread His Gospel knowing that He is the one who empowers it all—the spread of the Gospel here and there and inside of us and to others. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.