

## Kingdom Living: Stability

Luke 10: 1-12

Today we conclude our Lenten Series on Kingdom Living by taking a look at how we as people of faith are called to provide stability to an unstable world, how we are called to be steadfast in a world that is constantly changing, how we are called to reflect the utterly reliable nature of God's love through all that we do and say.

All of which are completely earth-shattering notions because they invoke such a different experience, such a different way of being, such a different way of relating to one another than what we have experienced in our world when we know that the only thing we can safely say that is stable in our world is that the world around us is always changing. Stability is such an unknown concept and practice in our world today. It seems to be the thing we want most in our lives and are constantly trying to achieve but never quite seem to get there. So we run the danger of living our lives always trying to make it to the next level, always trying get to the place where stability is a tangible thing for us, always trying to reach the next place where we can finally say we are at peace. When we do this, we run the risk of missing out on so much, always on the go, until maybe one day, we come to realization that we have wasted so much energy chasing an empty ideal, wasted so

much of our lives trying to create something that doesn't exist in our world, wasted so much time running from place to place that we never feel at home anywhere we go.

Stability is such an unknown practice and belief in our world that when we hear these words from the Gospel of Luke, we don't even realize that we have been given a gift, a gift that tells us where we belong, a gift that shows us how to grow, and become the person that God created us to be, a gift that creates the stability in our lives that we so desperately crave.

In this text, Jesus tells us that in order to cultivate stability our lives, we must not move from house to house but remain there eating and drinking whatever they provide.

Now, I'm sure we are all thinking-"Preacher, that is not such an earth-shattering statement. Of course, if one doesn't move from house to house, than one becomes stable. So is that all there is to stability and Kingdom Living?

And the answer is no. Stability as a part of Kingdom Living doesn't just call us not to move. If we only did that, then we would be putting boundaries on the Kingdom of God and ignoring what it truly means to be stable, to be rooted in the Kingdom of God. If we didn't move, then we would become static and boring. We would run the risk of simply plodding through life, just waiting for life to happen, missing out on the Kingdom of God in our midst, thinking we were really rooted

but in reality we are just stuck! No the Kingdom of God is not about become static, boring, or even becoming stuck in one place. The Kingdom of God calls us to more. It calls us to be ready for change and experience our how our lives can be transformed by meeting God in our midst. It is so much more than just not moving from one place.

So what do we mean when we say we are called to stability as part of the Kingdom Living? We mean that as people of faith we are called not to give into our very basic human need to run away from difficult or frustrating situations or hide our heads in the sand, hoping that if we ignore them long enough, the situations will just go away. We mean that as people of faith we are called to proclaim the Kingdom of God with its promise of lasting and meaningful relationships to a world, to a society that is so used to everything being disposable, that is so used to everything being replaceable, that is so used to everything falling apart and breaking. And when I say everything, I don't just mean things. I also mean people. We live in a world where people are treated as expendable, disposable, replaceable. We live in a world that only sees people for what they bring to the table, for what it can get from them, for what purpose can that person be used for so that others can get ahead. We live in a world that thinks people are interchangeable.

As people of faith, we are called to show that this is not right. People are worth more than the things they bring and worth more than the things they own. All are claimed and named as God's own and we are called to be in true relationship with one another always, walking beside one another, and never walking away. As people of faith we are called to create opportunities and space for grace and growth, for mistakes and learning, for support and love, for our neighbors and for ourselves by being in true community with one another, by claiming that our stability, grounded in the Kingdom of God, rests on our utter dependence on God.

When Jesus tells his disciples to find one place and stay there, eating and drinking whatever they provided, he understands that one can't create true community or real relationships with one another, key components of Kingdom Living, without building trust with one another, without committing to one another all of which is already hard to do in regular kind of life, and is even harder to do if the disciples were constantly on the move.

Jesus knew that the Kingdom of God could never be experienced by the disciples or any of the people they encountered if the only relationship that they had with one another was on a surface level. The experience of the Kingdom of God would be superficial at best. The Kingdom of God would only be a well thought out ideal filled with well-intentioned, but not connected people.

Jesus knew that there is something to be said about truly connecting with one another, about creating a space where all could belong, where one could discover more about oneself. Jesus knew that there is something about being grounded in a place, in a community where one could really come to terms about who we are and whose we are, that there is something about truly coming to a place where we are able to claim the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful about ourselves and each other in a safe and loving environment, that there is something about finally claiming and realizing that we can and should depend on God, that brings us peace, that brings us the stability that we all search for in our lives. Jesus knew that there is something about being united with one another that strengthens and encourages us along all of life's journeys. All of which we could not do if we were constantly on the move, looking for the next best thing, trying to figure out how we are going to hold it all together, going through life, only relying on ourselves.

That's why Jesus tells his disciples to stay. He wants the disciples to get to know the folks, and to build relationships with them. He wants them to build true coming with the people they encounter along the way. He wants them to realize that they can't make it on their own! They need others to help them grow. They need others to remind them that God is in control. They need others to remind

them that they can't do it all alone. Because then and only then can growth and grace truly happen.

Jesus knew that it would be easy, perhaps a little too easy for the disciples to move on, to leave for the next place out there on their mission, if they were not rooted and grounded in a community. It would be too easy for the disciples to break the superficial ties, especially if someone said something that made them mad or did something to upset them. Jesus understood that this was how the world works and he wanted to show the disciples that the Kingdom of God called for more. Jesus knew that this world saw people as disposable and he wanted to show the disciples that God expected more from God's own children. Jesus knew that this world was not steadfast and he wanted to show the disciples that God was utterly reliable and it is on this that their own steadfastness and stability was to depend. Jesus wanted the disciples to stay and experience the wonderful stability of the Kingdom of God that can only be found in true community and real relationships.

Just think about it. We have all had an experience of stability as part of Kingdom Living at some point in our lives. Take a few moments and think about those moments when we wanted to give up or give in but something or someone kept us going. And as we reflect back on these moments, we are so grateful that something or someone didn't give up on us. Because we realize now how empty

and how troubling our experience of life could have been. That's the gift of stability as part of Kingdom Living.

As we look back on those moments in our lives, we know that it was love that gave us the needed stability in our lives. It was love that created the space for us to grow, to make mistakes, and to figure out who we really are. It was love that gave us the roots to discover where we belong and it was and is love that continues to help us become the person that God created us to be.

By experiencing the Kingdom of God in our midst, We have experienced love in our lives as the stabilizing factor, love that was reflected through others, love that was shown to us through the ups and downs of life, love that found its strength and steadfast nature in something much more than we could ever imagine. We know that our lives have been stabilized by God's love because we know that it was there for us no matter what. We know that God will not give up on us. We know that on God we can rely.

And the good news is that we are called to reflect this same love, this same stability, this same steadfastness to each other. And we can do this not because we are perfect or have some secret powers. We can do this because we have been shown that we can utterly depend on our God and it is on this that our own steadfastness truly depends. We can and will be here for each other in true community with one another, in true relationship with one another because God

made a commitment to us and we are called to do the same. We are called to be here always for God's children, loving them, providing them with space to grow, and showing and sharing the grace of God.

That's Kingdom Living. We are called to be in true community with one another, listening to one another, praying for one another, mindful of the Kingdom of God in our midst, and always there for one another, providing each other with the space to grow and learn, and sharing the grace of God with all that we meet.

That's the stability that we crave in our lives and that is the stability that is available for all of us as we continue to strive to center our lives on God and serve one another.

It is a gift given and available to all of God's children: true community, there for one another, supporting one another, loving one another, providing grace for one another.

That's Kingdom Living. That's what we are called to practice in our lives as modern day disciples of Christ. True community based on love and space for grace.

May we have the strength and the courage to bring stability to this unstable world as we continue to center our lives on God and serve one another.