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## CONCORD SUNDAY SCHOOL

### LESSON 26

SUNDAY,  
JUNE 28, 2020

### **Matthew 10:40-42 NRSV**

“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

### **Background**

Earlier this month, we saw a vignette of Jesus commissioning the twelve disciples. In the 10th chapter of Matthew, Jesus gives the 12 disciples (and anyone else who may be in his new chosen family) instructions. He warns them that they are about to be like “sheep in the midst of wolves.” In your own devotional period, put yourself in the shoes of the disciples. How do you think they accepted this mission to follow Christ? Does it seem too dangerous for you? Would you have eagerly accepted? Without question?

**Today’s lesson will focus on the power of small actions to restore human dignity.**

**Read the scripture out loud together.**

**Discuss with someone in your home. Think of someone who showed up and offered kindness towards you. It can be a big gesture or a small gesture. How did it make you feel? What did it help you do?**

### **What's happening during this passage?**

This is a short, but powerful, passage. Throughout the tenth chapter, Jesus gives warnings like, “I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (verse 16), “you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me”(verse 17), “you will be hated by all because of my name” (verse 22), and so much more. This commissioning of the disciples is heavy and intense. There are risks associated. But this last passage in chapter 10 highlights all the rewards that come with following Christ. Whoever “welcomes you welcomes me,” a foreshadowing of the work that will be done in Christ’s name long after he is gone. Whoever gives “even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones” will not regret it.

### **Who are the little ones?**

It is unclear who Jesus is referring to. “Little ones” can mean, quite literally, children. It can also mean the youngest or the smallest in number. It can also mean the lowest in rank or smallest in influence. And Jesus was concerned about the people (of ALL ages) who were considered the little ones. In our context today, the little ones can refer to so many demographics. It includes anyone who is left out and left behind. Little ones can include Black people, people of color, women, immigrants, LGBTQ people, disabled and chronically ill people, poor people, children, elders, people who have lost spouses, incarcerated persons and so many others. “Little ones” is not a slur. Jesus loves and cares for the little ones, even when the world does not. Especially, even, when the world does not.

### **How do you think the disciples felt after all these warnings about being “sheep among wolves?”**

Jesus has just given the disciples a heavy task. They have been commissioned to Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. They should be prepared to give without payment. They should be mindful about the hate they will receive for doing work in the name of Jesus. How would you feel if this was in your job description? How would you feel if these were all the tasks you had to accomplish on your first day at the job? Do you think the disciples felt prepared for the task?

## How does Jesus support these concerns?

Jesus can sense that the disciples are overwhelmed. He ends his speech with a simple command. “Give cold water, and you won’t regret it.” Water is a human need that sustains life. To share water is to acknowledge someone’s humanity. (Remember the summers when we didn’t have any AC in the sanctuary? Those small water bottles made a difference!) Clean, cool, crisp drinkable water is an acknowledgement of humanity. Everyone can have water. Everyone can share water. This example of sharing water helps make the task concrete. It turns the theory of discipleship into *practice*.

Choosing to follow Jesus can be intimidating. But each of us can choose one thing that we’re good at and do *that* to the glory of God. There is room for everyone’s skills in the Kin-dom of God. You might not be able to do what everyone else does, and that’s okay. You can do whatever *you do well*. God still gets the glory. And giving a cool drink, especially to the people who have been marginalized, is a beginning.

**What questions do you still have of this scripture? How will you commit to journeying with this text this week?**



### Connection to Today’s World

Bedford Stuyvesant has a new hero, and it has four legs! Elias Schewel and his dog go out at night to hunt vermin in the neighborhood. As you may have witnessed, increased construction and less diligent trash pickup in the neighborhood has made it possible for mice and rats to congregate. So, in response, Elias realized that his dog could hunt rats. They go out and hunt as a service to the community. And the impacts are noticeable! So much so, that people have begun to ask for the dog’s and Elias’ services by name. You can make a request, and the pair will go hunting on the street. Even more moving, Elias does not ask for any payment. Instead, the two donate their winnings and crowdsource to donate bail money for protestors. In their own words, “let’s get rats off the streets and community members back on the streets.” Let *everything* that hath breath praise the Lord... and clean for the neighborhood!

To donate or learn more, go to  
[https://www.gofundme.com/f/hunting-rats-to-fundraise-bail-money?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_campaign=pcp+share-sheet&utm\\_medium=copy-link-tip](https://www.gofundme.com/f/hunting-rats-to-fundraise-bail-money?utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=pcp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy-link-tip)

**Journal:** Think back to Jesus' instruction to "give a cold up of water." What does that look like for *you* these days? What do you need?

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**Closing:** Sing/watch "We Have Come Into This House,"

For a video, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2CvyPFFaG8>

*We have come into His house  
Gathered in His name to worship Him,  
We have come into His house  
Gathered in His name to worship Him,  
We have come into His house  
Gathered in His name to worship Christ, the Lord  
Worship Him, Jesus Christ, the Lord.*

**Prayer:**

Dear God,

You are the God who has made Heaven and Earth. You know just how many resources there are in the world, because you created it. You designed this world to sustain all life. We thank you for the trees that help us breathe, the water that nourishes our bodies and the crops of the field.

God, you know what each one of us needs. You know what the Little Ones need. You know what We need. Meet us at the very point of our need, as you so often do.

Be with every person who is in need today. Be with US as we are in need. Remove all shame, guilt and fear as we ask for what we need. Convict those who may stand in our way. We thank you for the blessing that we trust is on the way. In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen