

**Interdependence Day**  
Ps 66: 1-9 & Lk 10:1-11. 16-20  
July 7, 2019  
Smith Church  
Rev. Donna Vuilleumier

After this--- Jesus has just made it clear to would-be followers that to be his follower is not an easy path, that there will be rejections and difficult expectations, yet this is the only way to share with others that God's kingdom is near.....

*Luke 10:1-11, 16-20*

<sup>10</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. <sup>2</sup>He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup>Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.

<sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' <sup>6</sup>And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town and

its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup>cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

<sup>10</sup>But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ <sup>16</sup>“Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

<sup>17</sup>The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” <sup>18</sup>He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. <sup>19</sup>See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

*May God bless these words to our understanding.....*

BBQ’s, beach trips, fireworks, the Boston Pops,  
parades, American flags, band concerts,  
Uncle Sam and patriotic music  
are all around us this long holiday weekend  
as a joyful noise, and as  
I wish you all a Happy *Interdependence* Day,

a day to remember our Puritan and Pilgrim faith roots,  
a day to celebrate our faith ancestors'  
determination for a religious reform  
that sent them away from the corrupt Church of England  
and eventually to America.

They came for the freedom to worship God,  
to faithfully acknowledge their dependence  
upon God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit,  
not upon the rituals and hierarchy of the Church.

They came for the freedom to worship God's deeds and power,  
knowing God's eyes are upon the nations.

They came to live their faith beliefs and commitments  
free from the harassment of church authorities.

They came by the thousands, and then by the tens of thousands,  
building religious communities  
that profoundly shaped the American ideal  
of the liberty of conscience,  
and the idea of Americans as God's chosen people.

In short time their descendants and other immigrants  
to this new land would fight for  
the freedom and liberty that created  
the independent country of the United States.

That is the independence that we nationally celebrate  
at the beach, at the parks, with friends and family,  
yet to truly celebrate *we must also remember and honor  
our dependence, upon God,  
and our dependence upon each other.*

We were created to be *interdependent*,  
to be mutually reliant upon others and upon God.

It is certainly culturally easier and a source of pride  
to talk about how *independent* we are,  
and what we have achieved on our own.

Independence is seen as strength,  
and dependence as weakness.

We take pride in being self-reliant as independence  
is both encouraged and prized in our country,  
in our Western culture.

So much of our parenting, teaching, and mentoring  
is a striving to raise a self-sufficient next generation.

And when illness or problems arise  
we fear losing our independence  
and feeling as a burden for our loved ones.

Independence gives us freedom, individuality  
and choices in how and where we  
live, work, learn, play and worship.

Yet that is only half of who we have been created to be.

From the very beginning, humanity was created  
for relationship and *interdependence*.

As the first human, Adam had a close relationship with God,  
but he did not have a companion who was like him,  
and Eve was created as a partner.

Over time societies formed and people  
relied on one other to function.

Different individuals took on different roles  
to help provide for the needs of the community.

Some produced food, others raised animals,  
some built dwellings, others cared for children,  
while yet others offered rituals of worship.

The bible is a library of stories which over and over shows  
that humanity is interdependent,  
that we are called to be in right relationship  
with God and one another.

It is a constant human striving.

Just as there is no independence in the Godhead,  
so it is with the Body of Christ.

One such story is our gospel lesson today.  
With instructions on how to travel simply,  
and how to be focused on the gospel message  
more than the potential for hostilities,  
physical dangers or cultural differences,  
Jesus sent his followers out in pairs.

Every time Jesus sent his disciples out,  
they were always in at least twos.

They were to travel and minister and educate together.  
Reaching out to others that the kingdom of God,  
the realm of God, was near  
is too big and too important to go out alone.

The 70 will succeed or fail based on  
those they attempt to reach,  
but they will experience this mission ministry together  
with a partner and with God's grace.

Imagine our New World ancestors  
reading these words as they sought  
to reform and purify their Christian faith  
as the kingdom of God was near.

Hostilities, dangers and differences abounded,  
but they were strengthened and encouraged  
just as the 70 were generations before them.

The 70 returned to Jesus in joy, saying  
"Lord in your name even demons submit to us!"

Jesus told the 70, "See, I have given you authority  
to tread on snakes and scorpions,  
and over all the power of the enemy;  
and nothing will hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this,  
that the spirits submit to you,  
but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Our ancestors saw the demon of *their* oppression  
lead to a free and independent nation.

They saw the colonists' authority of faith, and of grace,  
cause the enemy to submit and scatter,  
so that the new and free country  
could grow strong and never again  
be hurt as they had been.

However, the faith of our Puritan and Pilgrim ancestors  
found greater truth in Jesus' latter words,  
"rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The coming of God's kingdom is a joy for  
the defeat of wrong as well as for  
a right and interdependent relationship  
with God and one another.

While the founding religious beliefs of  
the Puritans and the Pilgrims  
no longer are a common cultural anchor in our day,  
and more and more people define themselves  
as "spiritual, not religious,"  
there are still core values and traditions  
--- for good or bad at times—  
that continue to wrap flag and faith,  
patriotism and God's goodness,  
in manifest destiny.

National holidays call us to a common cause,  
not to isolated individualism.  
They call us to recognize and reaffirm  
our *interdependence* as much as our *independence*.

How we set goals and work together for  
that common cause is through  
mutual reliance in a united effort.

Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley wisely wrote these words  
to remind us of *the power and the strength*  
of our *interdependence*:

If, recognizing the interdependence of all life,  
we strive to build community,  
the strength we gather will be our salvation.

If you are black and I am white it will not matter.  
If you are female and I am male, it will not matter.  
If you are older and I am younger, it will not matter.  
If you are progressive and I am conservative, it will not matter.

If you are straight and I am gay, it will not matter  
If you are Christian and I am Jewish, it will not matter.

If we join spirits as brothers and sisters,  
the pain of our aloneness will be lessened,  
and that does matter.

In this spirit, we build community and move toward restoration.

Friends, may this be how we live out the authority Jesus  
has given us to tread on snakes and scorpions,  
and over all the power of the enemy;  
so nothing will hurt us as together we remain mindful  
that our true rejoicing comes because  
our names are written in heaven. Amen.



