

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

June 14, 2026



HARVEST

as laborers in the fields

by Drew Downs

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. This is a fascinating image, when we think about it. It speaks to the abundance of the opportunity and the relative weakness of the competition. So, in that sense, what's the harm in trying?

At the same time, the language evokes work. Like, manual labor. Which is hard. And not what we think of when we think of love and Jesus and doing the right thing. People like

to talk about how easy that is. How normal it all is. To just be good. As if it isn't work. And as if, like most work, it doesn't require us to do things with and for other people.

This is an image of abundance and work and opportunity and trust and hope. A promise of the stuff we are called to participate in and that we have a place in that arrangement. It is hope and grace and love and we get to share it all the time.

ORDINARY TIME

2026

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Telling the Story

Now that we're back in Ordinary Time, it means we're in the half of the year when we read the gospel more or less in order. We start in Advent, which highlights the beginning of the story, then Epiphany gets into the start of Jesus's ministry. Lent and Easter jump around, taking us, ultimately, to the end. So the return to the narrative in Ordinary Time is usually close to where we left off in Epiphany.

As much as the highlights are familiar to most followers, there is something important in the ritual of reading through the gospels in order that helps us see the whole as greater than the sum of its parts. Because none of the four canonical gospels is a greatest hits album—each is itself a story with a narrative structure that reveals much along the way.

This past week, I made a big deal out of part of the story the lectionary skipped over (which is covered in another part of the lectionary) of Jesus stilling the storm. This isn't just a crazy thing that we learn about Jesus in the abstract. It is a moment that changes how the disciples see him ever after. And it comes at a time when we might be starting to think this is just about *healing* people and not *transforming* the world.

The story builds upon itself. And the more we attune ourselves to this building, the more we can get out of it. This was the the principal character of the Bible study I led several years ago—to help people learn the bigger story by practicing the telling of the story. Not because anyone in the group was dying to tell the story themselves, but so they could learn the story well enough to connect it. The funny thing is that it works like magic.

With love,
Drew+

ORDINARY TIME

2026

FOR SUNDAY

Proper 6A

June 14, 2026

Collect

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

ORDINARY TIME

Reflection

It was probably hard for the disciples trying to keep up with Jesus's teachings, miracles, and everything else because Jesus keeps changing the game out from under them. At least that is what it might feel like. Whatever it was that they saw in him, when he called them from the fishing boats and collecting taxes and what have you, and the stories they'd been told about a coming Messiah no doubt painted a kind of picture for them that they thought was predictable. They didn't think they'd know everything, of course, but they probably thought it would be kind of obvious.

And Jesus begins healing people and crowds are gathering and one of the people he heals is a gentile, which was not part of the program. When they cross the sea in a boat, and storms whip up, Jesus takes control of the weather — which was not part of the deal! — and then, as we read last week, a woman is healed just by touching his cloak as he raises a young girl from the dead. None of this stuff in Matthew 8 and 9 meets their expectations!

But then, Jesus has another whopper for them. He says its their turn to do what people don't do, what tradition has no systems for, and their minds can barely comprehend. He intends to send them out into the world in pairs to do the very stuff he has been doing: proclaiming the good news and healing the sick.

He isn't going to trick them into it. He tells them its going to be tough. That their work is important and could be dangerous. That they will, in the end, meet an untimely death by terrible forces who reject the mission of God. He isn't going to hide that from them. But the point isn't the glory or the suffering. They are doing God's work and this is the outcome of messing with expectations. Of righting what has gone so wrong. Of offering love to a world that needs love. They get to participate in something beautiful and good and that has consequences for everyone.

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