**Sent to Serve (Luke 10:1-9)**

 God has called each one of us to be His Kingdom’s servant.

 We are gathered here today to appreciate the Armenian Missionary Association of America as well as to discover (and reexamine) the source of strength for its service to God from within the Scriptures. Any Christian ministry that is devoted to service receives its inspiration and motto from the call to preach the Gospel. As you just heard, however, from today’s passage taken from the Gospel of Luke, we are not only called to a one-dimensional humanitarian ministry; rather, beyond that, we are to see our life journey as one in which we serve as those belonging to the Kingdom of God. Therefore, today we will be speaking about one of the most important purposes of our faith, that of service. Again, God has called each one of us to be His Kingdom’s servant. Let us speak, therefore, about this unique service…

 As Christians, our lives are inherently devoted to the purposes of the Kingdom of God. We often don’t think about our life purpose. We get busy with our daily tasks and our attention seldom rests on the greater, more general questions of life. For that reason, it is extremely important to hear the following pronouncements by Jesus (with my comments added):

 First, Jesus tells His followers that they are workers of the harvest, according to their individual gifts. Jesus also said that these harvesters are sent as innocent lambs and that the unbelieving populations of the world are like wolves. He said that during ministry, it is necessary to completely rely on God for material needs. In other words, if we were to update this language to today’s culture and models of ministry, it is God who will move the hearts of the wealthy to give, for the bosses to be generous, and even for clients and customers to similarly contribute to our ministry needs. In addition, ministry, said the Lord, would be aimed at families; it would be with the purpose of answering their need of salvation. During ministry, there will be rejection of our service. In those circumstances, God Himself will give what is due to those who become obstacles or make more difficult the work of His Kingdom. This ministry was also to be one of healing. Of course, Jesus is not speaking of the work of physicians, but, primarily, he is speaking of miraculous healings that are a direct result of prayer. This did not and does not mean today that physicians are not called to the work of the Kingdom – rather, that the ministry of supernatural healing plays a role in Kingdom ministry. Along with that ministry of healing, which was a practical proof of the presence of the Kingdom, the servant was to preach the approaching of God’s Kingdom to the listening individuals. You can see how multifaceted the ministry of the Kingdom of God is.

 There was once a preacher who received a letter that said, “There’s a meeting at which I would like you to come and speak. It is not a big meeting, and it will not take anything out of you.” The preacher answered, “I cannot come; and it will be of no use to anybody if I came, because if nothing is going to be taken out of me, then it will do no good to anybody else.” *Truly, ministry has a price, and cheap religion is not worthy to be preached.*

 And what about us? Where are we in this picture?

 God has sent you, my dear brother and sister as a harvester. You may not be a preacher with your words, but your service may express itself in different ways. Who said that your visits to the sick are not a work of God? Who said that when you pass out tracts on the streets that it is not a work of the Kingdom? Who said that when you send financial help to a ministry, that that is not a Kingdom deed? Who said that when you pray for miracles for the needy, or when you participate in repairing or building a house, that those are not Kingdom-minded works?

 Therefore, today, do not hesitate to bring your help to the ministries of the church, of which the AMAA is one branch. For example, if you are called to go to Armenia and serve the poor there, then prepare yourself to do so. If your ministry is called to be in our Sunday School here, then do not delay in participating. If you are called to serve a particular subset of our community here locally, then what are you waiting for? If God has given you wealth to be used for His Glory, then let that be used for His Kingdom purposes, be they to meet peoples’ needs, to help children’s schooling, to support the overall ministry of the local church, or other ministries.

May we never forget that as Christians who belong to the Kingdom of God, which is a Kingdom of Salvation, of Love, and of the Presence of the True God. Today is the right time to remember and to dedicate oneself to the service of the Kingdom. As Christians, our lives are inherently devoted to the purposes of the Kingdom of God. God has called each one of us to be His Kingdom’s servant. The Lord bless you all. Amen.