

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
October 18, 2020
Mission Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 52:7-10, Mark 16:15-20

Hymns: 494; 498:1, 2, 5, 6; 307; 283

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Romans 10:11-17

¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,

Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: God's determined purpose for the Church Militant --

Today we are focusing on missions. While we are not upholding all of our traditions for mission festival with a guest speaker and special congregation dinner, we are focusing on the important issues and remembering to focus our attention on the mission and purpose for the Lord leaving believers here on earth instead of having already received us to Himself in heaven. Yes, our presence on earth is not just a matter of time passing. The Lord has His purposes, His mission which He has entrusted to His Church on earth. This is the whole number of believers that make up the Holy Christian Church. This is different from the visible church. There may be tares among the wheat in the visible church, those outward organizations who claim the name of Christ. These outward organizations are flawed because of the presence of the sin in this world, and so hypocrites may reside within these manmade organizations.

The Lord knows those who are His. To those He has entrusted the gospel that they might proclaim that gospel around the world for the salvation of souls. We shouldn't take this honor, this privilege for granted. We also should not regard this responsibility as a burden. Neither should we dismiss it as less important than other goals and objectives that may be set by man. By nature we can be easily distracted, and lose sight of the purpose God has given us. It is important that we not only have casual reminders of this God-given purpose for our lives, and for the Church, but that we emphasize this purpose and make sure that it maintains its central place in our function as a Christian congregation, as well as its place in our individual minds, and hearts, and lives.

Sadly, too many have lost sight of this calling of the Lord as the chief function and purpose of the Church on earth, and even more so individuals have at times allowed a disconnect between the purpose of the Church, and their own purpose for being alive.

So let's look to the Word for the Spirit's guidance and encouragement in –

THEME: Fulfilling the Lord's Mission for His Church.

I. Sharing our Faith in our Redeemer God.

When we talk about mission work we often start with personal evangelism. For many people that is the most challenging area of mission work. We are hesitant to share what we believe, and by believe we mean what we KNOW TO BE TRUE. We hesitate to share what we know to be true with people who need to know it. Maybe we are afraid of saying the wrong thing, or we are afraid that our testimony will not be welcomed. We don't have these reservations in other areas of life. Perhaps we have experienced some blowback from talking about Jesus. But the thing is we have an absolute certain foundation with which to start. At the beginning of our text the Apostle Paul makes the point that the gospel of salvation is for all people, and there is no difference between people of one nation or race and another. We all need to know Jesus as our Savior from sin.

Romans 10:11-13 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Anyone and everyone who believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins will not be put to shame. That means that when anyone who believes is standing before the Lord on Judgment Day that person, no matter where he or she is from or what sins that person has committed, that person will NOT hear the words, "Depart from Me." (Matthew 25:41) coming from the Lord, but rather the words, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth." (Matthew 25:34). They will not be put to shame because the same Lord, (there is one Lord and Savior for all the world) that same Lord is rich in His grace and mercy to all who believe. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek or gentile from any nation under the sun. Earlier in this epistle Paul wrote: "*For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" (Romans 3:22-24)

That's the truth that we have to share with desperate sinners who are lost in the darkness when we are standing in the light of the

Lord. We are justified by God's grace alone through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus who died for us and rose again.

Fulfilling the Lord's mission for His Church doesn't end with personal evangelism, and as important as that is for us in our lives. It can't end with our personal evangelism because there are so many millions, yes, even billions of people in this world who need to hear about Jesus. We can't reach them all.

This is a central point for the Holy Spirit to get across to us as part of His Church on earth. We are to be active --

II. Sending Out Messengers of the Gospel.

We read the great commission from Mark's gospel as our gospel lesson this morning. "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" (Mark 16:15) The Apostles themselves covered a great deal of territory, but not all the world. The Christians in Antioch were directed by the Holy Spirit to separate out Paul and Barnabas and send them out as traveling missionaries who would proclaim the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 13:2-3) In our text Paul was impressing upon the Roman Christians, (and so the Spirit would have us also understand) the need for messengers of the gospel to be sent out to preach the gospel to people who do not yet know the Lord.

Romans 10:14-15 "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

There are some who propose that we should leave people alone and that when we share the gospel with them we are undermining their culture and doing great harm. The greatest harm that can be done is to leave people in the darkness of unbelief, in the hopelessness of vain idolatry. Too many have bought into this lie of the devil. So many have bought into it that laws have been passed in many countries making it a crime to share the gospel with others. But if we don't send messengers of the gospel, people

will never know Jesus as their Redeemer. And *“there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved!”*
(Acts 4:12)

This is the work that we do together with the other congregations that make up the CLC. Yes, some of our mission offerings go to support Immanuel High School and College in Eau Claire, where messengers of the gospel are trained, but far more goes directly to supporting the proclamation of the gospel among the nations of the world. We have unified budget here at St. Paul’s which means that a portion of every dollar given to St. Paul’s is sent on to support the ministry of the entire CLC. But there is still room for additional special offerings to missions, which is the CLC general fund, or to the Mission Development Fund, which supports special mission projects in foreign mission fields, or Project Kinship which supports widows of pastor and evangelists in foreign fields, and orphans and seminary students in distant lands. All of these gifts and offerings and ministry are the varied ways we fulfill this part of the Lord’s mission for His Church.

It is so vitally important, spiritually vital, that messengers are sent. Those that hear and believe the message welcome the good news. Paul referenced the passage from Isaiah we used for our Old Testament Scripture lesson this morning:
*“How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
“Your God reigns! (Isaiah 52:7)*

That Scripture not only reminds us of how welcome that news is for the lost sinners of the world, but also how focused we are to be in --

III. Steadfastly Proclaiming the Gospel.

There is a flip side that Paul experienced personally, and repeatedly. And so addresses that as well in our text.

Romans 10:16-17 “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Not everyone believes. Some even reacted violently to Paul’s preaching. He was stoned and left for dead. He was arrested and beaten more than once, for no crime at all. He simply preached the gospel. Some will respond to such persecution by altering their message or altering their mission, the mission given to them by the Lord. It is more acceptable to the world to do other good and kind things, and **not** preach the gospel. People are still very happy with new water works, medical assistance or simply building schools. These are all things that we are also glad to do, but the resistance to the gospel that is encountered in the world must not silence the gospel. Without the gospel all the other kindnesses become short term fixes for temporary problems, while one is withholding that which fixes the problem of sin and death forever.

People everywhere need to hear the gospel. Faith comes by hearing the message of Christ crucified. The Holy Spirit works faith through the gospel. It is not our fine deeds that create faith. It is not our powers of persuasion that convince someone to believe. It is the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of those who hear the gospel, and so they are called to faith and eternal salvation.

We rejoice with those who come to faith in Jesus. We receive them as our brothers and sisters in Christ. We will love them and help them with every bodily need as we have means and opportunity. But the greatest blessing we can impart to anyone and everyone in this world is the good news of Christ crucified. He who loved us and saved us from sin and death has granted us this special blessing that we have been authorized by the Lord to tell others that their sins have been forgiven. Doing this unlocks heavens doors for them, and we look forward to meeting them in our eternal home.

There is simply nothing else as wonderful for us to be dedicated to and involved in than fulfilling the Lord’s mission for His Church on earth.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.