

Sermon Romans 10 5 17 9th Sunday after Pentecost series A

Sermon: 9th Sunday after Pentecost – St. Thomas 21st Anniversary

Text: Romans 10:5-17 (vv.15b,17)

Theme: The main role of a Christian Church

Goal: That God may preserve His church in sending and preaching so that people can hear, believe and call on the name of the Lord

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Do you think my feet are beautiful?... Our text says: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” The quotation is from Isaiah 52:7 and the image is of a soldier running from the battle field back to his city to announce victory. When the watcher on the watchtower sees someone running, he recognizes the messenger and the sound of his feet running brings good news to the city.

The ministers of the Word are running to preach the Good News of victory through Jesus’ death and resurrection. As the soldier carrying the good message doesn’t run on his own behalf, but he is sent by his command in chief, similarly the ministers of the Word don’t preach the Good News on their own behalf, but they are sent by the Chief in command, Jesus Christ, through the call of a Christian church.

As we are celebrating St. Thomas 21st Anniversary, we have to be aware of the main role of our church: To proclaim the Good News so that more people would hear it and come to faith in Jesus!

I – Faithfulness to God’s Word (vv.6-8)

It is not any news that the church proclaims. Some churches are preaching different news from the one of the Bible. They are going astray from the truth of the Bible, searching for other news

according to their own wishes or following the tendency of the society.

Our text says that “the Word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming”. *Christ’s coming to the earth to provide salvation and His rising from the grave to prove His great saving power are both accomplished facts. No one needs to ascend to heaven to find Him or descend to the deep to wake Him up. All has been done. And all that we have to do is believe* (ABC 1366).

Faithfulness to God’s Word as it is revealed and written in the Bible is fundamental for a true Christian church, - for St. Thomas as well!

II – Proclaiming God’s Word (vv. 14-17)

But faithfulness to God’s Word doesn’t mean to preserve the Bible locked inside the church. Faithfulness is about sharing the Good News with those who don’t have it, so that they would know the truth as well and will come to faith in Jesus.

Paul describes in our text the process of acquiring faith and a little of how it works (PBrandt@cu-portland.edu). He asks four rhetorical questions, identifying steps that have been taken for any person to come to faith. The steps are,

- *First, the sending of preachers; -“How can they preach unless they are sent?”* - No one can claim to be a pastor without the call of a church. God works through the church to choose His ministers and to send them into the field. In the Lutheran Church, following the guidelines of the Holy Scripture, the ministers are not autonomous, but they are bound to a church body, which is responsible for his theological education, for sending them to ministering, and for supervising his ministry. This is to avoid private or personal churches, each of them preaching a different message as it is so common

nowadays.

- *The second step, the preaching of the Good News;* - “How can they hear without someone preaching to them?” – The ministers have several responsibilities; but the main one is to preach the Gospel.

Paul writes: “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). A minister and a church that don't proclaim the Good News of God's love in Jesus is not a Christian church anymore. They can have good activities, fellowship, social work, nice buildings, - but they are only like a social club. The called ministers of the church are sent to preach the Good News!

- *The third step is the hearing of the message preached;* - “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” – If someone doesn't hear the Gospel, he can never come to faith. *If you don't hear the promise you cannot believe the promise* (PBrandt@cu-portland.edu).

I have my doubts about some church bodies who give huge support to Red Cross and to refugees camps, but don't preach the Gospel for those people in need. Of course, we have to help the needy; but, with the bread, we have to offer the Bread of Life, so that by hearing, they may come to salvation.

- *And finally, the fourth step is, the response to the message, which is believing in Christ and calling on the name of the Lord.* – “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?” If someone doesn't **believe**, he will never call on the name of the Lord ... because he never **heard** about him... because nobody **preached** Christ to him... because no one was **sent** to ministering to him. And he will remain lost, without salvation.

These steps show that those who have already confessed Christ and believed in Him will be used by God to help others hear the same message” (Quotation in Italic are from ABC p. 1366).

“Faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

III – Confessing the true faith (vv.9-13)

Jesus said: “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks”

(Matthew 12:34b). Peter said to the Sanhedrin when he was on trial: “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Paul says in our text: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Believing and confessing cannot be separated. We confess by words and by deeds what we believe.

“Jesus is Lord” was the first public confession of the Christian Church and is an essential part of our Creed. If someone doesn’t confess that Jesus is Lord, he cannot be saved. *The term ‘Lord’ is used over 6.000 times in the Old Testament to translate the name of God, Yahwe. It is clear that Paul, when using this word of Jesus, is ascribing deity to Jesus* (CSSB,p. 1732).

The promise to those who believe and confess is clear: “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame...the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Conclusion: As we are celebrating St. Thomas 21st Anniversary, we have many reasons to thank and to praise God. But we have also many reason to ask for forgiveness for failing in our task to share the Gospel with others, for not clinging to His Word as we ought to, for not confessing in a loud voice that Jesus is Lord, for... for... In humbleness we always begin our service asking for forgiveness, and we go home strengthened by Jesus’ body and blood for a new week of life and witness God’s love to others. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town, 10 August 2014