

Sermon Mission Sunday 2018
Luke 24:44-53
HYMNS: 219, 216, 111, 240, 287, 239.

INTROIT: Psalm 96

P Sing to the LORD a new song!
C **Sing to the LORD, all the earth!**
P Sing to the LORD! Bless His name!
C **Proclaim His salvation from day to day!**
P Declare His glory among the nations,
C **His marvellous deeds among all the peoples!**
P For the LORD is great and very worthy of praise.
C **He should be feared above all gods.**
P For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
C **but the LORD has made the heavens.**
P Splendour and majesty are before Him.
C **Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.**
P Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
C **ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!**
P Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name!
C **Present an offering, and come into His courts!**
P Worship the LORD in holy splendour!
C **Tremble before Him, all the earth!**
P Say among the nations: "The LORD reigns. The world also is firmly established. It will not be moved.
C **He will judge the peoples justly!"**
P Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice!
C **Let the sea and all that fills it roar!**
P Let the fields and everything in them be jubilant! Then all the trees of the forest will shout with joy
before the LORD. For He is coming,
C **for He is coming to judge the earth.**
All: **He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth.**

COLLECT: Almighty God, in Your kindness You cause the light of Your Gospel to shine among us. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, help us to share the good news of Your salvation that all who hear it may rejoice in the gift of Your unending love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Readings

Old Testament reading: Isaiah 62:1-7

Epistle: Romans 10:11-17

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Amen.

The text for our sermon for this morning is written in the book of Luke 24:44-53 which was a part of our Gospel reading before.

44 He told them, "These are the very words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, namely, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, "This is what Scripture has said: 'The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day; **47** and on the basis of His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'

48 You will testify to these things.

49 "I am sending you what My Father has promised. Wait here in the city until you are armed with power from above!"

50 He led them out to where Bethany lay ahead of them. Then He raised His hands and blessed them.

51 While He was blessing them, He left them, and was taken up to heaven.

52 They knelt in worship of Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 They stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your word is truth. **Amen.**
Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

Today Christ our Lord instructs us in how evangelism works. He conducts His own missions seminar in our midst.

In the Gospel text, He uses the word "**testify**" or to witnesses, which is popular for people to describe what we are supposed to do. **You will testify to these things.** In other words "witness" to others.

Unfortunately, our Lord does not use the word in this way. He describes the disciples as witnesses, when He says, "**The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day; 47 and on the basis of His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**" Now, what are the things of which Christ says they were witnesses? It wasn't the proclamation of forgiveness and repentance, because that hadn't happened yet. Instead, the disciples were witnesses of His sufferings, death, and resurrection. They saw these events, and they were to **testify** about them to all nations. They were witnesses, or martyrs, because they would stand by their testimony even to the point of giving up their lives.

We however are not witnesses of Christ's death and resurrection. We can point to the testimony of the disciples, and that is right and good. But we cannot claim to bear witness to what we haven't seen. So what, then, can we do?

Well, Christ, as promised, is performing His mission and evangelism seminar today. So we, are in the right place to learn how missions work.

The problem is, the concept of missions as Christ teaches, is often not the way we feel it should be. We often want instructions on how to follow a step-by-step method, or we want a strategy or program that will effectively reach out to others. The problem is, Christ never speaks that way.

Instead, Christ opens our minds to understand the Scripture. Again, He doesn't do it the way we want Him to, - by flashy miracles or sudden revelations. No, He works through the teaching of the holy ministry. As He opened the disciples' minds, they in turn taught others, who taught others, and so on down the ages. In this way, the teaching of Christ reaches us.

We have had teachers of the Word. Whether in this Divine Service or in Bible study, or through other ministers, they have opened our minds to understand the Scriptures. From Moses to the Prophets and the Psalms, Christ has seen to it that we are taught what He wants us to learn. Our teacher is surely much less than an apostle of Christ, yet the teaching is still what Christ has handed down to His beloved Church.

So even now, in this Divine Service, the Lord is fulfilling His own mission, to open minds to understand His Word. In this way, you are able to comprehend the truths of God so that, if the opportunity arises, you are able to tell others. You are instructed in the very things that you need to speak the Word to those who need to hear.

What a wonderful gift, that here in this Divine Service, evangelism is taking place. Evangelism happens through the holy ministry that **preaches the Gospel, as well as Holy Baptism, as well as Private Absolution, as well as the Supper of Christ's Body and Blood for forgiveness.** All these are evangelism, as men speak the Gospel in Christ's Name, that is, by **His** authority and in **His place.** **Christ is the true Preacher,** even to us unworthy sinners.

Evangelism also happens when any forgiven sinner speaks the Gospel to another sinner. You don't need powerful speaking skills or amazing gifts. You only need the Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation to all who have faith.

But, this doesn't often satisfy us. We want more. The reason we want more is that there is a part of us that does not quite trust that the Word of God is all powerful. Now this is from our sinful flesh. But **the Word is always enough.** We should confidently be ready to speak to our neighbour, knowing that the Word we speak is effective **by the Holy Spirit's power to save sinners.**

Christ our dear Lord reassures us that His Spirit accompanies the Word. He says, **“I am sending you what My Father has promised. Wait here in the city until you are armed with power from above!”** This Promise is the Holy Spirit! - the one who gives faith, and opens minds, and saves sinners. He descended upon the Church at Pentecost, and always remains with us. Wherever the Word is spoken, this promised Spirit will be there.

So the same promised Spirit is active right now in this preaching of God's Word. As repentance and forgiveness are proclaimed in Christ's Name, the Spirit is here. He is with us, and abides with us. So how confident should you be to speak the Gospel to others? The third Person of the Trinity is with you to empower the words on your lips.

Yet we are still not confident. We are timid, because our flesh still hesitates. Instead of being bold proclaimers, we want to use tricks and lures. We are embarrassed and afraid.

How pathetic we are! Yet Christ died, yes, even for us. His Spirit opened even our fearful and timid hearts. He drove us to sorrow over our sins and faith in God's sacrifice for us. Even now, at this moment, He is doing it, to renew and strengthen us in faith, because He knows how weak we are. In His compassion, He doesn't cast us away, but gives us the spiritual food we need to continue.

After all, He gave Himself into death. He suffered horrible tortures for us. He didn't shrink back from dying for poor wretches such as you and me. For it was written from the beginning, that the **Anointed Messiah would die and rise again for the lost.**

This message of Christ's death and resurrection is the powerful Gospel that saves souls. The power fills us, - by His Spirit, so that even we timid sinners can speak the same Gospel to save other sinners.

Sometimes, though, we're not timid. Sometimes, we are so not timid that we want to claim authority and power that is not given to us. Sometimes we want to claim vocations that are not ours. The public proclamation and preaching of the Gospel does not belong to all, but only to those called to the ministry. Only the preacher designated by Christ, called and ordained, is to speak the Word on behalf of the congregation.

Yet any forgiven believer can speak in a private way, whenever they see opportunity. This is not under compulsion or threat of punishment, but purely out of the joy and gratitude for the wonderful gifts that have been given to us. You can speak to anyone and tell them that Christ also died for them, so that their sins are forgiven by the precious Blood shed on Calvary.

You are not even under pressure to make the Gospel succeed. Christ here speaks of proclamation, not conversion. He does not make it our responsibility to save sinners. He only places the powerful Gospel on our lips. **He is responsible for results, and He will save all those whom He has chosen from eternity.** So the pressure of evangelism is off our shoulders. The responsibility and threat of punishment is off as well. On the other hand, **the power of God is on our lips**, and the Holy Spirit Himself accompanies our spoken words. For He has given us the message to speak, the message of salvation.

And God even sends us out with His own blessing, as He did with the disciples. Even the blessing at the end of this Divine Service is in the Name of God, - so **He is the one who blesses you today.** With all this on our side, how could we possibly be timid?

Yet we are, - simply because we are sinners. We twist and forget all that God delivers to us. We turn confidence into fear, and glory into shame. That's what we sinners do.

Out of compassion, **He offers His forgiveness continually.** He strengthens and heals and blesses, over and over, and over since we never cease to need it.

So stay close to this powerful Gospel. Be continually in this house of God, praising His wonderful Name. Stay close to this place where He works repentance in you. Do not fast from this Supper, which gives you endurance for this difficult life. And He will create His good works, through you, and in you, in His time, as **He** has prepared them for **you**.

All glory be to Him alone, the Saviour who died, with the Father and the Spirit, is one God forever. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

3rd Hymn:111,

Prayer of the Church 6th Sunday after Pentecost Mission Sunday 2018.

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have revealed to us Your salvation in Your Son, Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and raised for our justification and is seated at Your right hand. We pray that You would preserve our faith as that of little children, guarding us against perverting Your saving Gospel with the notions and wisdom of man, - that we might have the glad confidence of forgiveness and eternal life, accompanied by Your Holy Spirit to not be timid in our mission, and allowing us to boldly proclaim Your Gospel to our friends and neighbours, solely for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You gave Your Son to speak salvation and peace to the nations. Grant to our leaders wisdom, justice and integrity, that they may serve in their offices for the good of those You have entrusted to their care; and grant to citizens a cheerful heart to honour authority and serve those around them. Preserve us by Your grace until the day when the battle bow is finally cut off and strife is ended forever..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for the many undeserved freedoms that You have poured out upon us, both the freedom from sin and the freedom we enjoy within our country. We pray that we may not abuse those freedoms as license to satisfy the sin that dwells within us, but rather that we may rejoice to act in service to You and to our neighbour..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Your Son has already borne all of our sins and infirmities to the cross. We commend to You all who are especially weary and heavy laden by sickness and affliction [/]. Grant to them healing and deliverance according to Your will, and sustain their faith so that they may find rest for their souls in You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You rule over all nations. Watch over all who have traveled to be here with us today, preserve them from harm and deliver them safely to their homes and by Your grace, grant that - wherever they are - they may dwell in the shelter of the Lord Most High. We also thank you for the rain that You have given us, and we humbly ask that You send us more. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all the saints who have gone before us, and whom You have delivered from this body of death through Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray that You would preserve us in the faith and continue Your mission to preach Your Gospel until we join them in eternal rest and peace with You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Christ our King still comes to us righteous and having salvation, yet humbly in, with and under bread and wine. - We pray that all who receive Your Son's body and blood today might do so with prepared and penitent hearts, rejoicing to be prisoners of hope set free by the blood of Your covenant..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

4th Hymn: 219.