

Epiphany 5
February 7, 2010
Romans 10:13-17

Never Preached
Blizzard of February 2010 in Delaware

Dear Believers in Jesus and His saving righteousness by the Holy Gospel, which has been proclaimed to you through Christ's prophetic/apostolic heralds, dear fellow redeemed people.

What is the connection between these words, the announcement of the birth of Samson, and the calling of Peter (really also James and John) to be Christ's fishers of people?

All three of these Bible passages show how God brings eternal salvation from sin and death, from the slavery of the devil and the eternal imprisonment of hell to sinful, lost mankind.

Chapter 10 Of Romans focuses on two things, salvation for sinners and God's Word, especially the Word of faith, the Gospel. They are tightly connected. The Gospel brings God's salvation to the lost.

So, that is why God appointed His Prophets and the Nazarites, like Sampson, like Samuel, like John the Baptist – all of whom were life-long Nazarites – and why God appointed His Apostles to proclaim the Good News of Jesus as His heralds.

The Word Needs to Be Proclaimed so That the Gospel May
Be Heard.

And the Gospel needs to be heard because all people need to be saved by God through His Gospel. No one can in any way, to even the slightest degree, save himself from sin, evil, unrighteousness, because tragically sin, evil, unrighteousness are now part of our being by nature. We are the problem, not the solution. No joint human effort will win deliverance either because we are all in the same boat and it's sinking!

This salvation from sin and death, satan and hell cannot, at all, ever, by any sinner be accomplished. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Human righteousness cannot save us because we are unrighteous and, as Isaiah put it, "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

Only God and His true, real righteousness in Christ Jesus can rescue us.

Jesus, God in the flesh, has serves as our Savior. He lived sinlessly and righteously to earn God's real righteousness for us and He died to atone for all of human unrighteousness, sin. He came here from heaven and lives on this Earth specifically to do

this. He rose from the dead, by His power as God, to prove to us and to assure us of our gift of forgiveness.

Clearly Jesus and lost sinners need to be brought together. We, the lost, cannot find Jesus, would never go to Him. But as Jesus came from heaven to us to win forgiveness and life for all, so Jesus also comes to us with these gifts by means of His Word, the Gospel.

So, the Word Needs to Be Proclaimed so that the Gospel May Be Heard Because the Word, specifically the Good News, is how Jesus the Savior comes to the sinner with salvation.

Faith comes from (out of) hearing out of that which God has enabled people to hear, that Gospel message. The message of the Good News of Jesus the Savior is the source, the origin of faith. The Gospel of God works faith in the Savior and His forgiveness. The Gospel is where saving faith comes from.

And this message that is heard comes by Jesus Christ's own word, His own speaking, His own utterances. All the prophets like Moses or Isaiah, like Samson or Samuel, and Nazarites, and Apostles, all of whom Jesus called, serve as Jesus' heralds. A herald was a person who announced somebody else's message, usually a ruler's or another important person's announcement. That's why St. Paul included the title herald when he said, "Of this Gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher." Jesus pointed Paul to this.

By Christ's chosen prophets and apostles, Jesus saw to it that our Lord's own message, the Good News, would get proclaimed so that it would be heard, so that it could work faith in Jesus, so that people would confess their faith in Jesus and call on Jesus for all things present and eternal and, of course, be saved forever.

When the writings, the Scriptures, of the Prophets and Apostles – our Redeemer's sent ones – are spoken, shared, heard, read today, the Apostles and Prophets are heralding. The message of Jesus is heard, God's will is heard.

That Word is still God's means and method for saving people through faith. Sadly, as Paul reminds us, the plain words of the Gospel are often rejected, not believed. So it has always been. Paul reminds us, "But not all the Israelites accepted the Good News." And Paul quoted Isaiah as an illustration of this, "For Isaiah says 'Lord, who has believed our message?'" Isaiah's sad question makes it clear, in fact, that many don't believe the Gospel message. Isaiah asked that question in the middle of one of the most magnificent Gospel passages of the whole Bible. In that section of his writing, Isaiah teaches about Jesus' suffering and death under God's wrath as the Substitute for all of sinful mankind. In that section, Isaiah described ransom from all sin for all people and taught also of the Savior's burial and resurrection from the dead. It's wonderful! Yet the prophet asks sadly, "Who has believed our message?"

While many do not believe the good news or even fall away from the faith, some do believe and stick to it, like the seed on good soil that sprouted, grew, and produced a crop.

That crop produced by the Gospel sown by our King Jesus, included mouths speaking the confession of the heart, "Jesus is Lord," and mouths calling on that Lord.

This is what the Apostle Paul wanted, what we also want, people saved by Jesus, rescued from sin, guilt and death, delivered from Satan's slavery and dominion. We want people to have forgiveness, life, and heaven with our Savior forever.

Let our Lord and Savior's Word be heard today in sermons, lessons, classes, through books, magazines and tracts, on the radio and TV, over the phone and the internet, on all kinds of websites, even by e-mails and blogs, by texting and twittering, from transmission tower to tower and off satellites and still today face to face with people talking with people. That still does work very well.

Please keep in mind, if you use some or all of the more modern forms of communication to include the Gospel message of Christ's Word by His heralds, in your messaging! Do not let the devil have exclusive use of these technologies.

See to it that Jesus' Word is communicated by all means at our disposal to see and hear so that the Gospel can produce faith in Jesus and His gift of saving righteousness which He earned for all sinners for their salvation. Amen