

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

Why do we sometimes find it so difficult to share the good news of the gospel with those around us? Is it fear of what people might think of us? Because we still have the ingrained idea that faith is a private matter? Will they get mad at us, get upset with us? Maybe it's simply fear of not knowing just what to say, or fear of not doing it at the right time. Do you think it might be a touch of all of these things and maybe a little fear of our own inadequacy added to the mix?

Can you imagine hearing Jesus say to you "why are you afraid o you of little faith?" I think of the first disciples being sent out by Jesus to share the news that the kingdom of God was near, to cast out demons and heal the sick, unless they weren't welcomed in a particular village. I wonder if they felt any trepidation or any of the fears we so often have.

Maybe we're afraid folks will look at us and know that we are also sinners, and resist our message. And of course we are sinners, there isn't a human being alive who isn't. Left to our own devices we are in bondage to sin and can't free ourselves. Without Jesus' help we are simply powerless. And that's what we share with others, that we like them are held in the repression of sin. But we have a Savior, his name is Jesus who died on the cross for our sins being sinless himself, and we are saved by grace through faith.

And Jesus' resurrection is the victory, sin and death have lost their sting, they have no hold over us because death died when Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead. That's why for you and I death is not the curtain falling but the curtain rising. This sisters and brothers is the very news we are to share, sent out by Jesus, his messengers, sent out as sheep among wolves,

We share that Jesus holds the keys to life eternal, forgiveness, salvation, to hope, the powers and dominions no longer have any hold over us, Jesus did what we couldn't hope to do and did it for us, he has triumphed!

Last week we heard from Jesus on the depths of devotion needed in his disciples, Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow, he talked about losing our lives for his sake. We should be under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task before us, the reception we receive is simply uncertain, there are those who will bitterly oppose us. But this morning Jesus talks of those who receive his disciples, who welcome his disciples.

Jesus was sent, and now he sends us, he sends you, he sends me. We, you and I, following in the footsteps of those first disciples who listened to Jesus and then went out, bring this jubilantly wonderful, glorious message to those around us, even though they may be resistant to hearing us, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit of God is with us and will help us with our words, and with our actions.

When we share, we can also be sure that “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me... and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of righteous person, will receive the reward of the righteous.” Being a servant of God means among other things that being able to perceive the word of God in others, and respond to it.

So now we know what we are to do, what we are to share with others. The commission has been given! The only question is whether we will be willing to follow that commission! AMEN