

Text: Romans 10:9,14-15

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved...¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ¹

Theme: "How Can they Believe without a Preacher?"**Date: November 9, 2015 Ordination of Robert Mutombo****Place: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Appleton, WI****Pastor Don Hougard, Benediction Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI****Vol 41 no 31**

Faith in Christ is important to us as Lutherans. It is what the Reformation was about. We are saved by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. The question is how do we get faith in Jesus? The answer is that someone preaches the Gospel to us. So Paul asks the question in our text, "How can they believe without a preacher?"

I. Here is the essence of our preaching and teaching.

A. We stood condemned before God because of our sin.

Paul makes that point throughout his letter to the Romans. He begins his letter with these words, "*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*" (Rom 1:18) In chapter 3 he writes, "*There is no one righteous, not even one.*" (3:10) In the same chapter he writes, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" (3:28) Paul is the bluntest when he writes in 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. Not a single one of us is righteous. We all sin. Because of that we all stood under the righteous condemnation of God. That is the Law, pure and simple.

B. But God sent His Son to save us from our sins.

Paul adds the word "but," to every one of those statements that I just quoted from Romans. *There is no one who is righteous... but now a righteousness from God apart from law, has been revealed... This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe.*" (3:21) "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*" (3:24) "*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (6:23) The fact is that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. (5:8) Jesus Christ bore our sins on the cross. He paid for them in full. He bore them, so that we could be clothed with His righteousness and be called the sons and daughters of God and heirs of eternal life with Him. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we can live in the hope of eternal life with our Lord and all of His people in heaven. This is the Gospel, pure and simple.

C. It is faith in Jesus that saves us.

If Jesus had died on the cross and risen from the dead, but no one ever heard about it, all that He went through would be useless. Paul makes it clear that we are saved through faith in Jesus alone and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God that creates faith.

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Ro 10:9–15). (2011). Zondervan.

II. So we need preachers who will declare this Gospel of Jesus Christ so that faith will be created.

A. Throughout the New Testament preachers were sent to proclaim the salvation that Christ one for us.

It began on a mountain in Galilee where Jesus called the apostles to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching all that He had commanded them. (Mt 28:19) Later God called Paul to be one of His apostles. Those apostles were sent by Jesus Himself. The congregations that they founded sent others to preach the Gospel. The congregation in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas and later Paul and Silas. Paul and Barnabas would appoint pastors in the congregations that they founded (Acts 14:23) Paul worked with other missionaries such as Timothy, Titus, Mark and Luke. Later when Paul arrived in Ephesus there were many pastors of the city who met him. (Acts 20:17) The Roman Empire was quickly full of pastors and missionaries who were declaring the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ. It has been that way throughout the history of the church. We have called and ordained men to serve in the office of the ministry to proclaim the wonders that God has done through Jesus Christ our Lord.

B. This formation of pastors has continued to be an emphasis in our Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

In 19th century Germany, the university was the center of pastoral training. A student received a classical education in high school, which was highly influenced by the Enlightenment. Then the student went to university for about 6 years where he was taught both traditional Lutheran theology and the newer movements of the day. Then they were examined, given a vicarage, and ordained when a church was available. There are still very few exceptions to this rule in Germany today.

When Germans began to come to America in great numbers, there were hardly any Lutheran pastors. Because there were so few pastors, they had to ride long circuits to serve the congregations that they had founded. An example was Friedrich Wyneken who travelled from Chicago to Toledo, OH and back. There was a huge need for pastors, and Lutherans had to be creative. They pleaded for pastors from Germany, but none were sent from the universities. Pastors like Friedrich Brunn of Steeden, Theodor Harms of Hermansburg, and Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau prepared hundreds of pastors themselves and sent them to America. Quickly Wyneken and one of the Loehe men named Wilhelm Sihler began to train new pastors at Sihler's parsonage in Ft. Wayne, IN. This became our seminary in Ft. Wayne. For many years it was called the practical seminary and emphasized practical formation over university degrees. There were other Lutheran pastors in Missouri who began to train young men in a log cabin. The 20 x30 foot structure served as both the classroom and the dormitory. This eventually became our seminary in St. Louis. Lutherans saw the need for pastors, and they were extremely innovative in how they prepared pastors for the congregations of North America.

Today we continue to train pastors who go through our traditional programs at our Ft. Wayne and St. Louis seminaries in which students now receive a master's degree through a 4 year program. But our church body has also seen the need for innovative training for Lutheran pastors, just as our forefather's did 150 years ago. Today we don't have a lot of Germans who are coming, but we have millions of people who are coming from all over the world. To meet this need, our church

has instituted several programs, such as the program that Robert was a part of, which was called the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology.

C. Robert, you are a part of that great tradition in the LCMS to innovatively train pastors that many will hear the Gospel and come to faith in their Savior.

God has called you through this congregation. Your brother pastors will soon ordain you as one of them, a called and ordained servant of the Word. This office doesn't come with great honor. It is an office of service. God is calling you to care for His sheep. You are to preach the Word of God to them with an emphasis of God's great love through Jesus Christ. Although you will not always see immediate fruits to your work, when you get to be my age, you will be amazed that God could even use you. Love your people. Care for them. Give them the treasures of God's Word and Sacraments. Then you will be one of those preachers, whom God uses, to bring people to faith in their Savior Jesus Christ.

This is such a special day. It is a day that you, Pastor Rex, Pastor Tim, Pastor Gui, and the members of Sion and Good Shepherd have worked hard for. We thank God that another preacher has been added to proclaim the wonders God has done in Christ, so that people may come to faith in Him. I sincerely pray that God will richly bless your ministry.

Amen.

