“Commissioned for a Purpose”

*We are commanded to make disciples, yet the word “evangelism” seems to be missing*

*from our store of words, because we forget that Christ prepares us and sends us out.*

Isaiah 52: 1 - 7

Romans 10: 4 – 15

In a conversation with my one of my boys a few years back, I made this comment to him. I said, “Paul says your feet is beautiful.”

He looked intently at his feet. At that moment, I said to myself “You are in trouble.” Then he asked, “Daddy, which Paul said that?” I responded that it is the famous Biblical Paul that you know. He looked at me and said, “How can Paul say this about my feet?” “Daddy, our feet are sometimes nasty.”

He did not end there, he continued by saying, “Is he saying so because Jesus made his feet beautiful when Jesus met with him on the way to Damascus?”

It immediately occurred to me that he has remembered the Biblical story about Paul’s encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus as Luke writes in Acts 9, and Paul himself recounts elsewhere in the scripture.

I prayed thanking God to myself, because that knowledge gave me the opportunity to have a fruitful conversation with him about the “beautiful feet” statement that I made without struggling to find answers to his often thought provoking questions. I therefore quickly responded by saying, said “Yes, on the way to Damascus.”

And I added that, in Damascus, Jesus told Ananias that Paul is a chosen vessel to proclaim the message of the Good News. Jesus prepared Paul, he may have made his feet also beautiful for the Good News. That is what Paul may be referring to.

“How did that happen?” he asked. By this time, I was running out of time for another engagement so I ended this interesting conversation here by telling him that we will continue another time.

Friends, as I later reflected on this conversation, I realized that God indeed at this moment made Paul’s feet beautiful, because he empowered him to take the message of the Good News to both Jews and Gentiles.

When we think about our feet, images that come to mind are no different from what my son said, “Sometimes nasty.” We do not think of our feet as beautiful as they are. The Greek the word for “beautiful” **ὡραῖος (ho-rah-yos)** means; lovely, timely, or welcome.

When we think of our feet, we think of them in terms of strength. They are strong, because they hold our bodies up.

When we think of our feet, we think of them in terms of their usefulness. They are useful, because we walk with them, we run with them, we dance with them, we jump with them, and we do many more other things with them.

What we often forget as Christian’s is that our feet are beautiful not because they look beautiful, lovely, timely and welcome. But they beautiful because Christ has made them beautiful, lovely, timely and welcome for the Good News.

Paul writes’ - “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!”

At first, Paul’s letter to the Romans seem to be directed to the Jews, because the first nine (9) chapters affirm that in Jesus Christ, God has fulfilled the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Chapter 9 and 10, Paul seems concerned about the reliance on the law by some Jews who are supposed to know better. Paul seems frustrated, and grouchy and voices it out that, he feels “great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart, and wished he would be cut off from Christ instead of the Jews who have hardened their hearts about Christ.”

Paul reveals that the mercy of God is for all and that the Gentile Christians have attained it through faith but not the Jews whose righteousness is based on the law for God’s mercies. Paul prays for the Jews who do not believe in Christ to have a change of heart so that they may be saved by having faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul’s concern was not only for the Jews, he understood that the Jews were very knowledgeable about the Torah but not all the Jews knew the Gospel. To put it in another way, some Jews heard the Good News but did not believe it. Paul was also concerned for the Gentiles, because the Good News had not reached most of them.

In the Gospel according to Matthew Chapter 9: Verse 37, Jesus told the disciples that, “The harvest is plentiful, but the harvesters are few.”

Brothers and Sisters, what Jesus said many years ago, is true today, because Jesus’ word is living and everlasting. Friends, today the harvest is plentiful, just as it was plentiful during the time of Jesus, as well as the time of Paul. Look around you, in your family, in the City of Duluth, in the County of Gwinnett. In 2010, City-Data.com has it at their website that 54.5% of residents in Gwinnett County were non-adherents. If this has changed over the years, then it may have increased than decreased.

In the text read from Paul’s letter to the Roman’s, Paul praises those who gather themselves and go out to proclaim the Good News – “how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News” Paul writes.

In verse 13, Paul writes that “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Paul injects successive rhetorical questions in this section of the letter seemingly to justify why someone needs to go:

How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed?

How can they believe in one of whom they have never heard?

How can they hear without someone to preaching to them?

In the last of these successive questions, Paul asks, “And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?”

Then Paul remembers and quotes from the Prophet Isaiah who commended those who would in the future bring the Good News to the people of Rome, to the people of Corinth, to the people in the neighborhoods of Duluth, to the people of Gwinnett County in Georgia.

The Prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament writes, “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces salvation….”

Paul’s argument is that in order for those out there, the sheep without shepherd, as Jesus called them, to call on the name of the Lord and be saved, they must have faith in Jesus Christ. The question he asks, is, “How can they have faith in someone they do not know, someone they have not heard about?”

Friends, it is impossible until they hear about Christ, so that they may believe in Jesus Christ and call on him for their salvation.

For this to become a reality, someone with beautiful feet needs to go to tell the story of Christ to them. They need someone to bring the Good News to them.

Paul calls us to this mission. Paul calls us to go and proclaim the Good News so that those who will hear, will believe and will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Remember, Isaiah said, “Here am I; send me!”

I believe that we here today, have made the decision to serve the Lord. We here have heard the God News preached from this pulpit many times, we have heard the Good News preached on television sets, and hopefully we read our bibles every day and so we know and understand the Good News, we have been prepared, and our feet are beautiful.

If we continue to imagine how these “nasty feet” of ours would bring the Good News to the multitude, that is when the fear of the word “evangelism” sets in. Yet, evangelism in simple terms, is spreading the Good News of Christ.

We know, have heard, and believe that “Christ loves us.”

We know, have heard, and believe that “We are children of God.”

We know, have heard, and believe that “Christ died for us.”

Let us go out there and tell this same story to the 54% - Brother/Sister “Christ loves you,” “You are a child of God,” “Christ died to save you,” “Believe and have faith in Jesus Christ and be saved.”

The Good news is that, we are standing on solid ground, higher mountains with our beautiful feet. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Friends, we are ready to go, so let us go, just as Christ commissioned us to go and make disciples of all nations.

Let us go out to teach them, just as Christ commissioned us to teach them to obey everything that Christ has commanded us.

Let us go and bring them in to be baptized, just as Christ commissioned us to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Good News is that Christ assures us that Christ will be with us always, Christ says, as Christ’s disciples, Christ will put what to say in our mouths, and Christ will make us fishers of people.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces salvation.”

Therefore, Go in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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