

## Sermon Draft

**Text: Romans 10:5–17**

**Sermon: “The Word”**

**“Lord, save me!”** Peter cries out what is not only the constant prayer of every believer but also an apt theme for the for this Sunday. The *Epistle*, our text, enjoins us to call on the name of the Lord, with the assurance that **“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”** (Romans 10:13). Matthew’s *Gospel* lesson sets this theme of God’s deliverance in a vivid context: Jesus’ power over nature as he walks on water in the midst of the storm and then reaches out his hand to save Peter as he is sinking.

In the *Old Testament Reading*, God echoes the message of his power over nature as he reminds Job of who it is who planned and executed the creation of the world. The *Collect* reinforces the theme of God preserving his people **“from all harm and danger.”**

We are drawing close to a historic day, Reformation Day 2017, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door at Wittenberg, Germany. This event led to our church receiving the name Lutheran and being known as the church that holds to Scripture alone as its truth, with salvation being by Christ's grace alone, through faith alone. Our text today celebrates these truths.

Luther wrote many hymns, but the hymn that is the favorite of many people and the one most closely associated with the Reformation is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." My favorite line in that hymn is "One little word can fell him." The power of the Word—that is, God's Word, Christ's Word—has unlimited power. It can fell the most powerful foe ever, Satan himself. What good news and comfort this is for us who believe and confess Jesus!

The power of the Word is so great that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The Word That Saves and the Word is powerful to condemn.

As we in the Lutheran Church teach, God's Word has two messages, Law and Gospel. And we must hear and proclaim both.

Paul begins our text in verse 5 speaking about the Law and its ability to make righteous everyone who keeps the

commandments: ***"For Moses writes about the righteousness***

***that is based on the law, that the person who does the***

***commandments shall live by them.***" Unfortunately, neither Paul

nor Moses nor we nor anyone else has or ever will perfectly keep

God's Law. So, the Law always speaks to us accusations and

condemnation. It points out our sin. It mocks us. It tells us we

deserve hell.

Paul laments all who reject God's Word, both his fellow Jews and the Gentiles. He quotes Isaiah in v 16, "**Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?**" The greatest tragedy throughout the history of the world is all of the people who have lost out on salvation and an eternity in heaven, instead trading that in for fleeting pleasures, fake riches, and false gods.

Especially tragic when they hear the Word that condemns and warns, yet they refuse to believe that warning. Bitterly tragic when they hear that Word and, rather than realize it condemns, think they can live by succeeding in keeping it.

In contrast, Paul points us to the "**righteousness based on faith**" in verse 6. This righteousness is not based on our good works or our living by, our keeping, the Law.

***“But the righteousness based on faith says, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down) or “Who will descend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)’”*** (vs 6–7). We don’t have to build a bridge to heaven, for Christ is our bridge. We don’t have to raise our God from the dead like other religions, because our God is alive!

You’ve heard the saying “the pen is mightier than the sword.” It means that the power of truth and the word to influence hearts and minds is stronger than the mightiest army. The pen of the Gospel is far mightier than any sword of the Law (good works to earn salvation) or any sword or accusation of Satan (“one little word can fell him”). That is very good news indeed!

***“The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”*** (v 8), Paul says. In fact, the Word is Christ! He is near us. He is in us. He is placed there by the Holy Spirit working through Word and water. We don’t create faith in our hearts or decide to believe in Jesus on our own. That’s what the Holy Spirit does in our spiritually lifeless corpses. And Jesus continues to come to us physically as he, the Word, comes into our heart via our ears, and his body and blood come into our mouth in Holy Communion.

Faith and confession are joined together in verses 9–10: ***“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”***

What is in our heart is what comes out of our mouth. It is impossible to believe and not confess. And it is impossible to confess without believing. Our confession is that "Jesus is Lord." That historically has been the simplest, yet most powerful, confession of the Church. And it is our bold confession today: Jesus is our Lord. This is the confession that will continue through all history. It is founded on the absolutely unshakable truth "**that God raised him from the dead.**" The resurrection of Jesus changes everything.

Paul, a Jew of impeccable credentials, agonizes over the fact that most of his fellow Jews have rejected the possibility that Jesus could be the Messiah. They deny that he rose. They deny that he is God. And they are the children of Abraham by birth. This should have been the fulfillment of their faith. Instead they have been pruned out of the tree of Christ and his Church.

And in their place, the Gentiles have been grafted in (Romans 11).

Paul is thankful so many Gentiles have come to faith. He is, after all, the missionary to the Gentiles. But he also hopes and prays that one day the Jews will also come to faith. And he knows it is not an either/or situation. God desires both to be saved, **“for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him”** (v 12). The riches of the Gospel—forgiveness, life, and salvation—are for everyone! **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”** (v 13).

Paul’s great desire, then, is for all to believe and be saved. He knows this is the task and mission of the whole Church. How can people believe who haven’t heard? he asks in verse 14. How can they hear unless someone preaches? How can someone preach unless he is sent?

And we, my friends, are the senders. We, the Church, have the privilege of sending people with beautiful feet—missionaries, pastors, proclaimers of the Word of Christ. You'll be glad to know that I washed my feet this morning. And I put on clean socks. And I'm wearing shoes. I really wouldn't have had to, you know. Our text says that I have beautiful feet. ***"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news"*** (Romans 10:15).

Even though our feet don't always smell the best or even look beautiful that doesn't mean Scripture is wrong. The point, even though feet usually aren't that beautiful or sweet-smelling, it's the message the person attached to those feet brings that makes them beautiful. The message itself is so beautiful and powerful.

There is nothing better than the Good News of Jesus. His death for our sins and his resurrection mean life instead of death, heaven instead of hell, for all who believe.

And the Good News is that Jesus died for everyone so that everyone who believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior will be saved.

You don't have to see or smell my feet. All you have to do is hear the sweet Gospel message that comes from the mouth that is connected to those beautiful feet!

The Word that they bring makes them beautiful as they preach the Good News. The message of salvation for the world God has placed in our hands! Through it, the Holy Spirit creates faith so that people believe and confess Jesus is Lord. ***"Faith comes from hearing,"*** Paul says, v 17—hearing the Word of Christ!

Scripture alone! Grace alone! Faith alone! Christ alone! These truths shine from the words of our text. The Word that ought to condemn us, instead gives us life. One "little" word, Christ, has conquered our foe!

We believe Jesus rose from the dead. We confess Jesus is Lord.

We rejoice in our mission of sending men of "beautiful feet" to preach the Good News to all, for it is true: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!

Amen