

Holy Trinity Sunningdale
Sunday, June 18, 2023
Readings – Matthew 9:35 – 10:8 & Romans 5:1-8

It took me quite some time to see the connection between the two Bible passages read today but finally the penny dropped. I hope unlike me you were quick to see the story of our salvation in the passage from Romans and our calling as Christians in the gospel reading from Matthew.

Romans 5:8 says, "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." This to me is one of the greatest descriptions of God's love for mankind. As Christians, when asked what evidence have we of the love of God? The fact that the crucifixion took place is proof of God's love for us should be part of our answer.

Verse 8 of Romans 5 tells us 5 truths about God's love. We are all familiar with these truths, but let's just remind ourselves about them.

1. God's Love is Intentional – Because of his great love for us, God purposely provided us with a plan of salvation. God's love was, and still is intentional love.
2. God's Love is Sacrificial - God willingly gave his Son to redeem us. Salvation is a free gift to us, but it costs God a great price. Hebrews 9:22 says that ...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.
3. God's Love is Personal - God sent his Son to be the sacrifice for sin. This is a personal, intimate action for each person. John 3:16 says, "For this is how God loved the world: he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life."
4. God's Love is Unconditional - "while we were still sinners" God offers us his love. Grace is defined as God's unmerited favour. Grace is God giving us something we could never deserve.
5. God's Love is Available - Because of God's great love, Christ died for us. It is done and the offer remains open! Christ died for us in order to reconcile us to God and make us his friends. God's love is always available.

It is Christ who brings us to the place of divine grace. All followers of Christ, all believers in God including everyone at Holy Trinity today have gained access by faith into God's grace. We should be so confident of God's grace that we can rejoice in the hope of sharing in God's glory in the future.

As a result of being justified by faith, we have peace with God and can rejoice in the hope of God's glory. Even when tribulations come, and yes, difficult times will come, we can see those trials as character-shaping blessings because God keeps pouring his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

In our reading from Matthew, Jesus has compassion on the helpless crowds, teaching, preaching and healing. Jesus models a life filled with compassion and he is looking for more people to show compassion and fulfil a great need. He tells his disciples that the harvest is great but the workers are few and asks them to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into his harvest field. Jesus then sends his disciples out on a mission of preaching, healing and caring for the needs of

people that is modelled on his own practice. The disciples continued the work that Jesus began and we are called to do the same.

The first set of workers Jesus sent into the harvest field were his own disciples as a model for us on how we can reach the world for him by making disciples of others who in turn can carry on the work. Paul tells us we have been equipped for the work with the love of God which is intentional, sacrificial, personal, unconditional and available. And God keeps pouring his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Each of us have different gifts and callings, just like the 12 disciples, some were fishermen, another a tax collector and another a zealot etc., but we are all workers in God's field charged with the task of reaching the world with the message of the kingdom and practical demonstration of its power by attending to the social needs around us.

Not all Christians will cross major cultural boundaries or become full-time missionaries or become ordained, but all of us must be mobilized for the world vision and mission Jesus has summoned us to share with him, for which we have been equipped with the love of God by the Holy Spirit.

Andrew Murray said at World Missionary Conference in 1910, "We shall need three times more men, four times more money, and seven times more prayer." This morning, let us pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest to send more workers into his fields, including me and you. Amen

Dolapo Ogunbawo, 18 June 23