

Missional Identity: Proclaiming Hope to the World

Text: Romans 10:13-17

¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord 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!**” ¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, **faith comes from hearing the message**, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Introduction:

Summary of the whole “Defined Series,” (1) Chapters of Identity: Who Am I?, (2) Layers of Identity: Christ in Me, (3) Marks of Our Identity: Church Defined, (4) Baptist Identity, (5) Priorities of Identity: Kingdom, (6) Confessional Identity, (7) Forgiven Identity, (8) Immersed Identity.

Now we will explore the last identity that we have as Christians. Understanding ourselves, our core identity, makes us realize that we have a purpose. This purpose, first and foremost, is to glorify God in Christ by the Spirit. It is my purpose to shake our comfort and remind you all of our duty as Christians.

Providentially, we are not just called to sit around the church nor to enjoy having fellowship with each other. (Illustration: Johannah Arceno) We clap our hands every time there are special numbers, talents but never have I heard that we clapped our hands for those who have evangelized or bring someone to Christ.

Main Idea:

Verse 13 alludes to Joel 2:32 which is also related to verses 9 to 10. This verse, also, encapsulates the major theme of the book of Romans which can be found in (1:17b), “...But the righteous man shall live by faith,” and (5:1), “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Verses 14-15 are rhetorical questions by Paul emphasizing the significance of proclaiming the gospel. In reverse order, for a person to be saved is to have (1) a preacher sent from God, (2) proclamation of the message, (3) hearing the message, (4) believing the message.

1. The Preacher

We indeed have models of missionaries who exemplified the priority to reach all nations for Christ, namely, Hudson Taylor and Lottie Moon to China, David Livingstone to Africa, Adoniram Judson to Myanmar (Burma), William Carey to India, and David Brainerd to Native Americans. But it is a misconception that only those who have the gift of evangelism who will proclaim the gospel.

Proclaimers are not limited to pastors, missionaries, and evangelists. In the context of the ministry of proclaiming, we are all called to go and make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Evangelism is not another department or an isolated ministry only for those who are gifted. But this duty is given to all

Christians. Ultimately, as conformers of Christ, we ought to follow the ultimate preacher—Jesus himself. He proclaimed His life, purpose, and promise to His people, and even after His resurrection (with the disciples in Emmaus road). Even, prior to His ascension, He commanded us to preach.

2. Proclaiming the message

The word “preach or proclaim” in Greek is “kerusso.” In literal meaning, it means, “to herald” or to announce publicly. In the Biblical time, the disciples preached the gospel about Christ on a public platform. There were no microphones, nor megaphones, hence the need to proclaim it aloud so others will hear the message.

Operating this idea in mind, truly, we need to do it intentionally and consistently. Just as how the apostles continuously sharing the narratives of Christ to these people for them to realize the importance of the gospel message.

But how dare we—the church—nowadays enjoy having “too much” fellowship while many souls are dying in pain doomed to hell. We realize how vulnerable life is, especially, the presence of Covid-19 amplified its fleeting, vanity, and brevity of life.

We have a lot of ways to participate in proclaiming the gospel, through para-churches, digital evangelism, and of course through our local church, communities, and workplaces. There is no reason not to proclaim God’s Word. The only opportunity for us to proclaim the gospel is here on earth.

You are the most pitiful person if your entire purpose in life only of this world. Material things, money, success, leisure, comfort, and even family. I'm not saying there are not important, but if these are only your goal in life then you're truly wrong. (Share the “Don’t waste your life counting seashells”).

3. Hearing the message

What message? Indeed, this is the gospel of Christ. For some scholars, it is only about the announcement of the good news. For some, they include the “justification by faith.” For many, it is the entire application of the Kingship of Jesus Christ. Having subtle differences, focusing that this message is about Christ. His coming—the incarnation, the fulfillment of all the covenants, and His death and resurrection which extends to His ascension and return.

Why the gospel message? The term “gospel” literally means good news. It is as if someone already discovered the 100% cure—take note, not just a vaccine—but the ultimate cure against the Covid-19 virus. So that is the good news, however, it is not yet “fully” good news to everyone until it is announced publicly. Because it can be kept in secret, and people are ignorant about this cure. Hence, the significance to proclaim this cure so everyone can give them hope and see that there is a future. (Still following?) In the same way, having this hope is not fully applied unless people believe the message.

4. Believing the message (John 3:16)

Why is it important to believe? Not all hearers will believe the message, but as we learned a while ago that it is significant to have someone sent to proclaim the message to people who can hear and believe. Only in believing, caused by the Spirit, that a person be saved.

Remember John 3:16, “*for those whosoever believe in Him*” shall be saved. Those who only believe can fully enjoy the benefits of the gospel message. Returning to our illustration, take note—this is not the vaccine alone but the ultimate cure—only those who will willingly receive the cure will be cured and be protected in his or her entire life.

But the Christian *good news* is more than physical illnesses, and way beyond cure from Covid-19. Our good news is that our sins will be forgiven, made justified, righteous, holy, and pure that gives us the benefit to be in the presence of God, the grace to stand in front of the gates of heaven, and live an eternal life without pain, suffering, trials: no more anxieties, no more sleep deprivation, no more crying, no more depression, and no more sin. That is our good news, and this gospel is grounded in Christ.

Verse 16 explains that it is not our duty to convert a person but rather to focus on proclaiming God’s word. Do not be mistaken that you can change someone’s heart. You cannot. Hence, do not be impatient nor be disappointed if a person did not respond positively to your witnessing. Let the Holy Spirit work in their hearts, not you. Your main calling is to bring the message of God to them, then pray to God for the rest of it. It is God who makes a seed in one’s heart grow, but we are the instruments to plant these seeds—which is the Word of God—in their hearts through proclamation. Again, it is the Spirit that converts and transforms a soul.

Therefore, in verse 17, the proclamation is significant in equipping one’s hope. And this hope is in the words of Christ—known as the gospel about Christ. But if taken literally, these words are still being spoken by Christ through His messengers, that is us—Christians. The only time that you can tell that “Christ has spoken to you,” is only when it is through His Word. And we know that is true because it is the Spirit that applies these words into our hearts as an illuminating power transforming our lives both inward and outward.

Conclusion:

I will conclude in the passage of the Great Commission, in Matthew 28:19-20, “¹⁹ ***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*** ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” These verbs are all capture in one action word. Meaning, the going to evangelize, the making of disciples, the baptizing, and the teaching are all part of one command. Hence, interlocking all in one significant act for Christians to follow.

When was the last time you share Christ with someone? When was the last time the church added a new member through evangelism and not through a change of membership? When was the last time the church baptized? When was the last time you asked for prayers for courage to share the Word of God?

In the last part of our Defined series, we know that we are already empowered by the Spirit to proclaim the gospel of Christ (Acts 1:8). That, we are also witnesses of the gospel narrative as it was applied by the Spirit in our hearts. Therefore, it should be the very purpose of our living: the evangelizing (going for missions), the making of disciples—through bible studies (transformational over information), the baptizing—incorporating to church members, and the teaching (exploring deeper God’s word). I hope you will read our bulletin for today.

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