

Sermon Series: “Sharing the Good News—A Way of Life” — Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—1/25/2009
Title: “The Good News”
Text: Acts 10: 23-48
Intro.: *Illus.: Angels unawares*
Theme: Sharing the good news involves placing into your thoughts a simple presentation of the key truths of the faith and sharing it in the life context of a relationship wherever and with whomever God chooses.

Are you ready to go where God wants to send you?

- Sometimes, God works in unplanned and instantaneous “good news” ways.
- 1. **Acts 10:23-29** and explain the out-side-the-box experience this was for Peter (vision, Gentiles, suddenness)
- By claiming Jesus as your Savior, you have been deputized as his ambassador
- 1. *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20*

Keep it simple and focused on the “Main Thing” (Acts 10:34-43)

- **Illus.: Avoiding Dead Orthodoxy**
- Jesus who is Lord of All (**vs. 36**)
- 1. We preach a Savior who truly can claim, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Matthew 28:18*
- 2. That brings **peace** in the midst of *economic free-fall, nuclear-tipped threats, family upheaval, or terminal illness*
- Jesus, the Christ—God’s Anointed One (**vs. 38a**)
- 1. *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*
- 2. In a pluralistic world Christians are unabashedly convinced and convincing that Jesus is the sole way of salvation
 - a. **Illus.: President Obama’s inaugural address – “Christian/Muslim, Jew/Hindu, non-believer”**
 - b. Peter was convinced that Jesus was the real deal because he saw and witnessed God’s power at work in Jesus
 - c. *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30-31*
- Jesus as “God with us” (**38**)
- 1. The Emanuel principle — not a God way off in the distance but one who lives with you, in your, and for you
- 2. *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil. Hebrews 2:14*
- Jesus as God’s answer to sin and death (**vs. 39-40, 42**)
- 1. Simply stated all of us are *“fellows-in-the-same-ship”*
 - a. Peter had to get Cornelius up from off his knees (**vs. 26**)
 - b. **Illus.: A costly sacrifice given away free-of-charge**
- 2. Most compelling testimony is yours--vulnerable to talk about your forgiveness and your hope in fear of death
 - a. *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Psalm 23:4*
- Jesus who is coming back (**vs. 42-43**)
- 1. The thought of being accountable to a Judge of the living and the dead could be overwhelming
- 2. Good news is this event can be turned into a homecoming for those who turn to Christ and trust in Him as Savior
- 3. *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Hebrews 9:27-28*
- A simple way to remember these truths is to commit the words of the Apostles Creed to memory
- 1. **Print Apostles Creed to be spoken together**

Discipling is all about a “inclusive” mindset (Acts 10:44-48)

- Leading another to Jesus is a Holy Spirit activity through us
- 1. Peter the clean up hitter for what the Holy Spirit had already prepped and empowered to happen in Cornelius
- 2. Our role is not to convert but to proclaim (good news a person) (**vs. 44**)
 - a. *No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3*
- The good news is the ultimate answer to racism and inclusion
- 1. **Illus.: Christian caste system**
- 2. Getting past our hang-ups to keep us from letting Holy Spirit work through us (**vss. 45-46**)
 - a. *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right vs. 34*

Angels unaware

"Dodie Gadiant, a schoolteacher for thirteen years, decided to travel across America and see the sights she had taught about. Traveling alone in a truck with camper in tow, she launched out. One afternoon rounding a curve on I-5 near Sacramento in rush-hour traffic, a water pump blew on her truck. She was tired, exasperated, scared, and alone. In spite of the traffic jam she caused, no one seemed interested in helping. "Leaning up against the trailer, she prayed, 'Please God, send me an angel . . . preferably one with mechanical experience.' Within four minutes, a huge Harley drove up, ridden by an enormous man sporting long, black hair, a beard and tattooed arms. With an incredible air of confidence, he jumped off and, without even glancing at Dodie, went to work on the truck. Within another few minutes, he flagged down a larger truck, attached a tow chain to the frame of the disabled Chevy, and whisked the whole 56-foot rig off the freeway onto a side street, where he calmly continued to work on the water pump. "The intimidated schoolteacher was too dumbfounded to talk. Especially when she read the paralyzing words on the back of his leather jacket: 'Hell's Angels -- California!'. As he finished the task, she finally got up the courage to say, 'Thanks so much,' and carry on a brief conversation. Noticing her surprise at the whole ordeal, he looked her straight in the eye and mumbled, 'Don't judge a book by its cover. You may not know who you're talking to.' With that, he smiled, closed the hood of the truck, and straddled his Harley. With a wave, he was gone as fast as he had appeared." The Bible says, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2 **Larry D. Wright.**

Avoiding Dead Orthodoxy

The Word became flesh--and then through theologians it became words again. **Karl Barth.**

A Costly Sacrifice Given Away Free-of-charge

Clarence Jordan, author of the "Cotton Patch" New Testament translation and founder of the interracial Koinonia farm in Americus, Georgia, was getting a red-carpet tour of another minister's church. With pride the minister pointed to the rich, imported pews and luxurious decoration. As they stepped outside, darkness was falling, and a spotlight shone on a huge cross atop the steeple. "That cross alone cost us ten thousand dollars," the minister said with a satisfied smile. "You got cheated," said Jordan. "Times were when Christians could get them for free." **Michael Jinkins.**

Christian Caste System

In his autobiography, Mahatma Gandhi wrote that during his student days he read the Gospels seriously and considered converting to Christianity. He believed that in the teachings of Jesus he could find the solution to the caste system that was dividing the people of India. So one Sunday he decided to attend services at a nearby church and talk to the minister about becoming a Christian. When he entered the sanctuary, however, the usher refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go worship with his own people. Gandhi left the church and never returned. "If Christians have caste differences also," he said, "I might as well remain a Hindu." That usher's prejudice not only betrayed Jesus but also turned a person away from trusting Him as Savior. ***Our Daily Bread, March 6, 1994***

Acts 10:23-48

²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." ²⁷Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. [NIV]