

The title for this sermon comes from a **book** written by my seminary professor Kevin Vanhoozer, who we called "The Hooz." The Hooz is a good professor and has written many good books and articles for the Christian faith. One book is called "Faith Speaking Understanding." In this book, The Hooz develops an analogy for the church based on the theater, which he calls the Drama of Doctrine. In this analogy, the actors and actresses are the church, the stage is this world, the script is the Scriptures (get it, Scriptures?), and the playwright/the author of the play is God. Our role as the church is to follow the script and be directed by the playwright's voice to live out the story he has written. The Hooz **says** this:

Doctrine gives direction for bearing faithful witness, for speaking understanding. If action 'speaks' louder than words, then faith speaking understanding involves both verbal and nonverbal modes of communication: words and deeds.

Hopefully the last phrase sounded familiar because it is very close to our **mission** statement. The mission of Calvary Christian Reformed Church is to "Proclaim the good news of Jesus, in word and deed, hear, near, and far." Today we will focus on proclaiming the good news of Jesus in words, that we are people who are speaking our faith, that we are speaking our understanding of the gospel of Jesus.

We are continuing our sermon **series** "Romans and Us" with the 2nd sermon of Gospel-Motivated. Pastor Nick preached another good sermon last week, defining the gospel for us. If you haven't heard it, go watch it on our YouTube channel called Calvary Twin Cities 1, or listen to the audio of it while driving in your car at calvarytwincities.org and click on sermons.

Romans 10:9-15 is another fantastic section of this book and I believe God has some important things to teach us today. It begins with "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." A little context will help us understand the magnitude of the bold statement "Jesus is Lord." The New Testament was written in Greek and the word "Lord" here is translated from "kurios." The Old Testament was written in Hebrew but was eventually translated into Greek. This Greek translation of the Old Testament was called the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, the personal name for the Lord, Yahweh or Yavah, was translated as kurios. So that means when Paul writes, "Jesus is Lord" he is putting Jesus on the same level as God the Father, the Lord Almighty. That's a big deal! The man Jesus of Nazareth who walked this earth is equal to Yahweh. Another reason the statement "Jesus is Lord" is significant is because kurios was the title given to the Roman Emperor, who at the writing of Romans was Nero, and Nero hated Christians and brutally killed many of them. Instead of saying "Nero is Lord" these Christians were saying, "No, Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Kurios."

The Scriptures teach us if you really believe deep down, that Jesus is Lord, and you declare it with your mouth, you will be saved from sins. The guilt that hangs over you will be removed in this life, and you will inherit eternal life with the Lord and all his people.

It is an "If... then" statement. If you believe and declare, you will be saved. It doesn't say "if you go to church every Sunday" or "if you're nice to your neighbor" then you will be saved. It says if you believe and declare you will be saved. Although, I think if you believe you will want to go to church on Sunday and you will be nice to your neighbor.

Notice the words "mouth" and "heart" show up multiple times in just a few verses. Paul is highlighting the importance of both in salvation. I made a little chart that shows the importance of mouth and heart.

| | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Mouth + no heart | = | <u>Hypocrite</u> |
| Mouth + no mouth | = | <u>Ashamed</u> |
| No heart + no mouth | = | <u>Honest unbeliever</u> |
| Heart + mouth | = | <u>Unashamed Christian</u> |

Mouth + no heart = hypocrite.

- When you don't walk the talk. You talk big that you are a Christian, but you deny him by your lifestyle. Jesus was not afraid to call these people out. And neither was Apostle Paul.

Heart + no mouth = ashamed.

- For some reason some Christians are afraid to speak up, afraid they might offend someone, afraid people might think they're weird. God's Word encourages us to not be afraid, not to be ashamed, but to be confident in our faith, to be excited about church, to be excited about being a part of our church, to be excited we are a part of Calvary Christian Reformed Church. I'm excited to be a part of this church! I know we have people here who love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and who love other people as themselves. I have no shame in inviting people to this church. I really believe their life will go better if they are connected with a church and are transformed by the gospel for the rest of their lives! I really believe God is at work in us and is shaping us through the preaching, the music, and our involvement in the community.

- Think about God's perspective. He made us, gives us life everyday, sacrificed his own son to save us from eternity in hell, and sometimes we are afraid to tell other people about him? God might be thinking, "I did all this for you, and you are afraid to tell someone else about me?"

No heart + no mouth = honest unbeliever.

Heart + mouth = Unashamed believer

The top 2 can be challenges for any of us of any time of our lives. But we pray by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are moved away from the top 2 categories toward the 4th category.

This verse is one of the reasons why we have **Profession of Faith** here at Calvary Christian Reformed Church. We baptize babies of Christian parents to give them the sign and seal they are true members of the covenant, that the promises of the washing away of sin by the blood of Jesus are true for them. We take seriously our covenantal vows of praying and discipling for the kids of our church. When an individual is ready to profess their faith, they meet with a pastor and an elder, and then profess their faith in Christ to the church. We don't make every sophomore in high school profess their faith. We want the profession to be genuine. We want each person to believe in their hearts that "Jesus is Lord" and we know everyone's walk with God is different and has different timing, and that is okay. Last year, we thanked God for the profession of faith made by some teenagers and some adults.

Verses 14 and 15 are a chain of questions all linked together.

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?

If you take the verbs of the questions in reverse, we see the natural progression of evangelism. A Christian is sent, the Christian proclaims the gospel, the unbeliever hears the gospel, the unbeliever calls on the name of Jesus, the unbeliever believes in Jesus and is saved.

Historical context will also help us with the word "preach" in these verses. The word can be translated as "proclaim" or "to herald." In the city of Rome at that time, there were no newspapers, there was no internet, no social media. News was proclaimed by heralds who walked the **streets** and shouted the news for everyone to hear. This is the type of communication Paul was encouraging.

In other words, heralds were like **Newsies**. Hannah and I watched this the other night. It's true, we gave into Disney+. We watched it, we were singing and dancing to it. Okay maybe it was just me dancing. "The world will know!" Good stuff. Anyway, they proclaimed the headlines. They told people the news because they were trying to sell newspapers.

The Bible says these heralds are sent. So who are the heralds and where are they sent?

We are the heralds! Every Christian, every believer. Everybody in the church is a herald. There's some hymnal slang for ya. Everybody! It's not just the pastors job, or the missionaries job, it's everybody's job. These rhetorical questions come right after the teaching of salvation. There isn't a major break between the sections, "This is for everyone in the church. Okay now the next few lines only apply to pastors and missionaries." The act of heralding the good news is directly linked with salvation. If you are saved by grace through faith in Christ, then you will also be a herald of the gospel. **Tim Keller** agrees, "God has sent us with the message of salvation. He may send us overseas, into the pulpit, or across the street to our neighbor. But ours are the beautiful feet, bringing the good news."

Our mission statement is to "Proclaim the good news of Jesus, in word and deed, near, and far." How can we live this out? How can we fulfill our mission?

First, let me share some examples of our we are fulfilling our mission here, near, and far. Let's start with "far." Last Sunday we commissioned our **Honduras Team!** They have beautiful feet! They are bringing the good news to El Guanacaste. They are encouraging the believers down there through relationships. Pastor Nick will preach the gospel. The team will talk about the gospel. The team will embody the gospel by serving through construction projects and having fun playing games with the kids and swimming in the river.

What about near? Every summer, Calvary Christian Reformed Church sends a team of high schoolers on a **Serve Mission Trip**. Last year we served in Sioux Falls South Dakota. We spend our days serving people in the community, we spend our afternoons playing games together with Serve teams from other churches across the country, and we spend our nights worshipping the Lord - singing, listening to a gospel message, and discussing the gospel in small groups. One of the serve projects was a free car wash in the parking lot of First Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Falls. The teens had a great time sudsing up the cars, rinsing them clean, and sometimes splashing each other. Most of the time, the drivers would come out of the car and talk to us. One time, a young man came out and talked to some of the teens and myself for 20 minutes. He told us his girlfriend just broke up with him, that he was really stressed about his job, and that he grew up in church but had faded away, but he was hoping to reconnect with a church in the area. All this came from us asking, "How are

you today?" I'm grateful to God for providing opportunities like this to proclaim the good news in words.

What about here? How can we proclaim the good news of Jesus **here**? In our beloved Minnesota, specifically in the Twin Cities Metro. How can we speak our faith here? Sometimes it's easier to share our faith near and far. We are on a trip. We have a clear mission. We feel the energy of the adventure. All good things! Sharing the gospel here in our everyday lives, in our communities is possibly the toughest one to do, but equally important as near and far.

Verse 14 says, "And how can they *hear* without someone preaching to them?" The word "hear" is translated from the Greek *ἀκ ο ὦω*. This means more than simply to hear, like you hear a song on the radio, it also means to perceive, to consider, and to understand. This requires instruction, persuasion, and patience. I think many people in the Twin Cities have simply "heard" about Jesus, but many people haven't really understood him. Many people in this area have maybe grown up in church, or have seen things on the news about the church, but really haven't perceived the power and justice and mercy of God in Christ, and the genuine love and support of a church who lives out their faith, who worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth. I think many people have not truly grasped the significance of Jesus' life, his teaching, his miracles, his compassion, his truth, his death, his victorious resurrection, and his ascension to heaven.

How do we provide this evangelistic instruction? I see 2 categories.

| <u>Programs</u> | <u>Spontaneous</u> |
|--|--|
| Sunday Service Choir GEMS Cadets Anchor Bible Studies | Street House Breakroom Hallway Gym Restaurant |

- 1) Programs - Sunday service, choir, GEMS, Cadets, Anchor, all other Bible studies
 - a) Very important! Moments scheduled in our lives to raise our eyes to heaven and consider the wonders God has done for us and this world.
 - b) Are we involved in these?
 - c) Do we invite people outside our church to these? I know this is happening and I pray it happens even more.

2) Spontaneous

- a) Gospel conversations that are not planned, not scheduled in our Google calendars. But so important! Being totally honest, I think our church and many other Christian Reformed Churches are not so good at this type of evangelism. We are all over program! We excel at organizing programs, being reliable, thinking ahead, but maybe aren't the best at spontaneous gospel conversations.
- b) These are moments in everyday life when you have a conversation about Jesus or the gospel or church. Moments like talking to your neighbor in the street when you're taking out the trash, block party, house, talking to a co-worker in the breakroom, talking to a friend in the hallway between classes, talking to a teammate in between games, talking to friends while eating out.
 - i) Last week, Hannah and I went out to eat with some new friends from our neighborhood. We knew from previous conversations that they were sometimes going to another church in town, so we asked, "How's church been going?" That question sparked a long conversation about what church is and what church is supposed to be, which all connects to the gospel.
 - ii) Another cool conversation I got to be a part of was during a football game. I was watching the game with a bunch of friends when 1 of them told me he has a co-worker who is Lutheran and a co-worker who is Catholic. He said the other day at work they were talking about what makes Christian Reformed different than Lutheran and Catholic. My friend wanted to know more about some of the theological differences so he could share those with his co-workers. Those types of conversations all lead to the good news of Jesus.
 - iii) The Holy Spirit sparks these types of conversations. We need to be ready to ask or answer questions in these moments.

1 Peter 3:15 says "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"

If things are not working, do not be discouraged. You are being faithful to God's call. You are being sent, you are heralding, you are bringing the good news, you are speaking your lines in the drama of doctrine, you have beautiful feet.