

Sermon on Mat 9:35-38

Dear friends of our Lord Jesus Christ: Mission starts in the heart of God, fills the life of our Lord Jesus Christ with compassion and get's the Church praying moved by the Holy Spirit.

Missions starts in the very heart of God. There is but one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no other. From the very beginning the holy Trinity has ordained and determined to save us and the world from the evil threesome – sin, death and devil. In his overwhelming goodness this one God and Lord undertook to become man himself and to save us and our children together with all the world. He was to crush the head of the serpent and to bring forgiveness, life and salvation once again to us his people from all nations and corners of the earth. That is what he promises to the fallen Adam and Eve – to Noah and his next of kin – to Abraham, through Moses and all the prophets to keep the faith alive in his one holy Church traversing the ages and generations as it sojourns through deserts, oceans and plains, across continents and throughout the world. It is the story of the Old Testament. The Word becoming flesh (Hummel). Throughout the ages our God keeps the only saving faith in his saviour – Jesus Christ our Lord and God – alive by repeating, highlighting and elaborating his promises of life and salvation. In kings, prophets and priest of old he incarnates progressively the image and type of the saviour to come until in the prophet Isaiah we hear and read: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* (Isa 53:6-7 KJV)

The incarnate word of God – the Son of man – the suffering servant – Jesus Christ – our Lord and God fulfilled all the promises of old. In him they are all Yes and Amen. He accomplished, what he had set out to do – namely the good, right and salutary will of the Father: *"Go forth, My Son," the Father said, "And free My children from their dread Of guilt and condemnation. The wrath and stripes are hard to bear, But by Your passion they shall share The fruit of Your salvation."* (Paul Gerhard LSB 438,2) The Son fulfils the will of the Father. He does so vicariously for us. Just as the

Father had determined and laid down starting from Moses and through all of holy Scriptures and Isaiah summarizes so lucidly: *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* (Isa 53:4-5 KJV) That was the healing he brought about. Healing of body and soul. Restoring the lost righteousness in the sight of God. Granting peace and making all things whole once again. He, the good shepherd himself. Gathering the lost sheep and bringing them into the fold of the one holy Christian Church. The lost sheep of Israel and those from beyond and even those from the very ends of the earth. That's what he does with so many like Zacheus in Jericho or the Samaritan women at Jacob's well or even that convicted robber and murderer hanging on the cross with him, who was the innocent, perfect sacrifice of atonement and propitiation for all our sins on that memorable Good Friday. His mission was to save all through faith through his forgiveness of all our sins. Whoever believes in him and is baptized will be saved.

"To obtain such faith God instituted the office (i.e. service and ministry) of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit, when we so believe. Condemned are the Anabaptists and others who teach that we obtain the Holy Spirit without the external word of the gospel through our own preparation, thoughts, and works." (Kolb & Wengert BoC 40)

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." So – today – he also wants us to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will do exactly that – send forth labourers into his harvest. Call, train, equip, test and ordain men to go out as pastors, preachers, teachers, missionaries, evangelists and bishops to preach, teach, spread and carry out the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the ends of the world – teaching them everything that he has

entrusted to us: The main parts of the Christian faith! Preaching the divine Law (10 Commandments) and the most precious Gospel (Apostolic & Nicene Creed). Teaching to pray properly according to all seven petitions of the "Our Father". Baptising them in the most holy name of the triune God. Administering the office of the keys in binding and loosening of sins. Serving at the Lord's table with the most holy and precious gifts of the very body and blood of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. All of this so that they will come, see and taste how friendly our Lord and God is as he invites us here already to the coming feast of consummation there in his glory, when he comes to fetch us home and at last see what we have here believed – namely him as our Lord God all in all – and that he is indeed faithful and has carried out his saving mission for us and our salvation most perfectly and successfully. He truly is the awesome God – he alone – Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, behold in mercy your flock and feed them with your word and sacrament. Grant in your mercy labourers into your harvest. Call, equip and empower them to serve your people in this world with mercy, love and dedication of true servants. Open our eyes, hearts and hands so that we would do, what is pleasing to you and beneficial to those in need – especially the poor, outcasts, orphans, widows, the downcast, the mourning, ill and dying, but also those who are heavily burdened. Grant them your grace and relieve them by your goodness. Let your kingdom come to us and all people and do come yourself to save us from all evil. Come Lord Jesus – come soon! Amen.

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