

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
June 24, 2020

“WHAT DO I SAY?”

“When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

Matthew 10:19-20

I'm a bit behind my usual schedule as it has been quite a day so far. I haven't stopped talking since about 10:00am, and the clock now says 1:35pm. I imagine that doesn't surprise you. We had our Tuesday morning Bible study from 10:00 to 11:00am, and then I spent time teaching two of our more brave members how to use the Lutheran Service Builder computer program to produce the Sunday worship services, the bulletin, PowerPoint and play the hymns that we use from recordings. Not that I am not going to do that anymore but in the case that something unexpected happens and I'm not able to for a while. It's all time well spent (I pray my students agree) but it has also kept me from considering what it is that I should write to you about in this devotional message. Often the hardest thing to do in writing is coming up with what to write about. I am hoping and praying that according to the Scripture reference above the Lord will provide. The context of these words of Jesus is that they are instruction and encouragement to His disciples as He sends them out to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God present now in the world through Him. He warns them that they'll encounter opposition and even violence for the message that they're carrying. The warnings that Jesus gives are for their mission in the towns and villages of Galilee, but especially for the ministry that they will carry on after His death, resurrection, and ascension back to the right hand of the Father. There's a clear application to our lives today as witnesses to Jesus and His Gospel message. Just like the original disciples we are called to discipleship and an important part of that is testifying to Jesus, His love and compassion and His completed work of salvation of the world. For that there will be people who push back against us. I've said it before...and you know I'm going to say it again..."nothing strikes fear into the average Lutheran more than the prospect of having to do evangelism!" That comes from a misconception of what evangelism is. First, let's look at the origin and definition of the word "evangelism". It comes from the Greek "*evangelion*" which means "good news". That morphed into the Old English term "Godspel" which then became Gospel. The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus entering into the world to save us from sin death and the power of the devil through His obedient life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. In Him the gates of heaven are now open to all people who can receive Him and believe in Him. That is certainly VERY good news. Evangelism, outreach, witness...whatever you call it...is simply pointing people in the direction of this good news. It's not about preaching eloquent sermons to people, although there's nothing wrong with that, but it's building relationships with our neighbor(s) so that we have the opportunity to tell them about what Jesus means to us and what He's done for us. Take for example a man that we met this morning in Bible study. We don't know his name. We don't know his occupation or has family status either, but we do know that he suffered incredibly due to the broken state of this sin filled world. You'll find the account in Mark 5:1-19. Jesus and the disciples sailed through a vicious storm in the night and arrived in pagan Gentile country on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee in the morning. Jesus gets out of the boat and immediately encountered a crazy naked man who lived in the tombs outside of a small village. He was possessed by 7 demons and would cut himself, howl loudly and scare the daylights out of everyone. They tried to chain him but he would pull the links apart and break the shackles into pieces. Jesus drove out the demons (it wasn't a good day to be a local pig) and the man was healed. In the end he sat at Jesus feet, clothed, quiet and in his right mind. He begged Jesus to go back to Galilee to be with Him, but Jesus said, "*Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.*" (verse 19) He did just that and everyone marveled. That's our call too, to tell our friends and family how much the Lord has done for us, and for them.