

In this lesson Paul teaches that the word of faith is a gift; by it we make our saving confession that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead. Without God's grace the way of righteousness would be impossibly distant. But the faith that leads to righteousness is in our hearts and the confession of salvation is on our lips. This is true for all people, no matter what their background, and so it is essential that the Good News be carried far and wide, that all may call upon the name of the Lord.

And now the reading from the book of Romans.

Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 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. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

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? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 14:22-33

The gospel is the story of Jesus' walking on the water and his rescue of Peter after his faith fails him. The narrative has several levels of meaning. In legendary terms Jesus is like the Creator God who strides over the watery chaos monster. Matthew's gospel stresses this revelation of Jesus' close relationship with God, as God's Son, and the importance of faith on the part of the disciples. A church beset by its own problems and lack of faith would be glad to perceive in this story the saving presence of its risen Lord.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.

