

5th Sunday after Epiphany
February 6, 2022

“That I may teach others to worship God...”
(1 Corinthians 14:19)
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text for this 5th Sunday after Epiphany is from the Epistle reading for today, 1 Corinthians 14:19

“yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue”

Here ends our text.

Introduction:

Some people have the ability to talk the ears off a cornfield. Yet, very important things can be said in a few words. At a wedding, for instance, it only takes a few words to express one’s love and commitment for life to another - “With this ring, I thee wed.”

And the minister or justice of the peace with the authority given by God says only a few words to make the union official. “I pronounce you husband and wife” (6 words)

And then, it is sometimes a tradition to stop all the talking and give the couple a moment to express their love. There are five words that people look forward to hearing. “You may kiss the bride.”

5 words of understanding is what Paul strives for. 5 words that teach the saving truth of Jesus in order to save a lost soul. In the verses immediately before our epistle Paul says,

“10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who

speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. (1 Corinthians 14:10-11)

That's the most important goal – the edification of the church. So, we also strive with Paul to learn and teach five words of understanding of the law and the Gospel.

I. Teach five words of the law
First the law. The commandments are short, direct and need not many words. Do not...

The commandments of course show us our sin. We learn in the catechism that the law is mirror. The law is a curb. The law is a guide. Those are important 5 word sentences, right?

Scripture tells us directly that we have all failed to keep the law. Learn these very important Scripture passages to teach to others.

Romans 3:12

They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

And again in the same chapter in verse 23 we hear:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The law is a mirror. The law shows our sin. But that's only half the understanding of Scripture. And that understanding cannot save a man, only humble him.

I. Teach five words of the Gospel

The Gospel shows our Savior. For verse 23 of Romans leads us directly to the good news of verse 24.

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

So also, learn Romans 6:23. The first half is God's law and the second half is the Gospel.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Yes, learn these verses by memory and then teach them to others that they may be saved. That's always the goal to share this good news of the gospel as Paul says in the very next chapter, chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2)

Then Paul goes on to teach the very fundamental truths of the Christian faith in the next verses of chapter 15.

“3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,”

Paul was trying to help the Corinthians see that a few words of understanding is the most important way to edify another. They were enamored with speaking in tongues or languages. Paul also spoke more tongues than they he admitted but he would rather speak just a few words that could be understood by another.

So Paul says in verses 13-15 of our epistle that whether the Corinthians are speaking, praying, or singing, it doesn't help another unless it is spoken in a language that another knows.

“Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.” (1 Corinthians 14:16-17)

Of course, Lutherans love to say “Amen”, but only if we know what we're saying “amen” to, right?

For example, if you're assembling something that your just took out of the box. You look at the instructions, but first you have to find the English instructions. Chinese, French, Spanish? They don't do you any good. Pictures are good though...

The Gospel message that edifies is direct and to the point. Look at Jesus' beatitudes. They are about four to six words.

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the [a]earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.**

**1 Corinthians 1:23
but we preach Christ crucified**

**1 Corinthians 2:2
For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and
Him crucified.**

**“Preach [and live] as if Jesus was crucified yesterday, rose from the dead
today, and is returning tomorrow.”
— Martin Luther**

The Lord is my Shepherd

**John 3:16
For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever
believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**Acts 16:31
So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you
and your household.”**

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead,” (1 Corinthians 15:20)

II. Teach others to teach others

It is most important that as you teach others the simple Scriptural truths of God's love, that you teach them to also do the same. Teach others to teach others! So we hear this simple Scriptural truth in 2 Timothy 2:2.

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

Our goal as God's church is always to teach others the faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us to show love to the uninformed, the unbelievers by speaking of God's love in the language that can be understood. So, in the verse write after our epistle, Paul says:

“Therefore, if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. 25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”

We teach others that they may be saved and worship God!

The Reformation was begun because the Gospel had become obscured and darkened. It needed to be revealed. God chose Martin Luther to reveal again the simple saving truths of God's word. “Faith alone”, “Grace alone”, “Scripture alone”. Much meaning in a few understandable words.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:8)

After much prayer, Martin Luther defended these truths at the Diet of Worms in 1521 before the Emperor Charles the 5th with just a few words. He was told to recant the words that he had written in the 95 theses and other writings against papal abuses and false doctrines being taught by the church.

What was Luther's response?

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.”

It is also said that Luther spoke this short sentence of his solid faith in Jesus: “Here I stand; I can do no other.”

He trusted in God. Luther also said these 5 words, “Pray, and let God worry.”

Luther stood on the Rock of His salvation and he wanted all men to also know that it is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ that we are saved.

The saving truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be heard clearly by all. To be heard, it must be spoken by each of us. As we have been taught, so we teach the simple and clear truths of God’s word that all men are sinners, that all men are lost without God, but that God in His mercy has saved all men through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

Paul said that he’d rather speak just 5 words with understanding.

What are 5 words of Scripture that moved Luther to begin the Reformation?

“The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17

Well, that’s six words actually. Find much strength in these words of salvation in your life and teach them to others. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)