



St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Bismarck, North Dakota

## Mission Festival Sunday

October 1, 2023

Pre-Service Meditation: Psalm 46

Hymns: 773; 346; 774/262

Scripture Readings: 2 Kings 23:21-27  
Luke 7:24-35

### Topic: Evangelism; Justification

**In Jesus' name!**

It is rather hard to miss the key thought in the hymn we just sang. The word “ashamed” occurred eight times with the word “shame” added one additional time. The world in which we live does not like to use the words shame or being ashamed any more. Those words suggest that a judgement has been made, and the world’s current favorite Bible passage, although misunderstood and misapplied, seems to be: “*Judge not, that you be not judged*” (Mt. 7:1). The Bible, however, uses the word “ashamed” quite often. In fact, it uses that word in the New King James Version 105 times. If you read through all 105 passages in which the word “ashamed” is used, you will find it used in three different ways. First, it is used in the sense of being ashamed of a moral failure—being ashamed of a sin you have committed. There were times when my dear mother very properly told me as a child, “Son, you should be ashamed of yourself!” Second, it is used of being ashamed of a failure—being confronted by such a failure or humiliated by it. Third, it is used of being ashamed through either disappointment or embarrassment. That is the sense in which it is used in the hymn we have just sung and the text we are about to consider. Please rise for the reading of our text.

### Text: Romans 1:16-17 NKJV

***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”***

In Christ Jesus, whose gospel word brings joy, certainty, and salvation to God’s people, dear fellow redeemed:

There was a time when Christianity dominated the culture of our country. The Bible was even used in public school textbooks and, unless a person were Jewish or a total unbeliever, most people in America confessed themselves at least nominally to be a Christian. The general truths of the Bible were known, and biblical morality, while not always practiced, was acknowledged by the vast majority of our citizens as being the proper and correct way to live. It was not only acceptable to be known as a Christian, but in many ways it was expected. Such is no longer the case. We are now living in what is being called the post-Christian America. It is no longer acceptable in many places or circles to confess yourself to be a Christian or to voice your opinions on such basic biblical truths as marriage being the life-long union of one man and one woman, or that there are only two genders—male and female as God created them. The temptation facing us in our day is to be embarrassed by the truths of the Bible, or to be intimidated into silence when issues of religion or morality arise.

My dear friends, we are not the first generation of Christians to face a hostile environment. The apostle Paul was repeatedly beaten for his faith, imprisoned because of his faith, and ultimately executed in view of his faith. Yet, the apostle Paul, who had once so violently opposed the gospel of Christ, remained committed to that gospel, for he recognized its power and its importance. He was not ashamed of that which he confessed. He refused to be silenced, for to fail to confess his Savior, Jesus Christ, would be to deny Him. To fail to share the gospel of Christ would endanger countless souls lost in sin and doomed to death. That, in view of the love of Christ for himself and this world of sinners, the apostle Paul was unwilling to do! Dear friends, Satan is leading countless souls down the broad path to hell—souls lacking both faith in Christ and an awareness of the judgment to come.

We cannot afford to be silent! We must speak! **LET US NEVER BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, for it is the power of God to salvation, for everyone who believes, and in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith!**

I.

Yes, let us always say with Paul: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”* While we may indeed live in a very different day than the apostle Paul in terms of certain external factors, the basic spiritual situation facing all of humanity has not changed. There is a God who created heaven and earth. Every human being is a special creation of God and, therefore, subject to Him. God’s law demands perfection from every human being. No human being is perfect. In fact, far from being perfect, every human being by nature unless converted is living in a state of sinful rebellion against God. A day of judgment is approaching, at which time all human beings will stand before their Creator God and give an account of their lives. Those whom God accepts will experience everlasting life in heaven—the realm of God. Those whom God rejects will experience everlasting torment in hell. These are the facts that face each of us human beings—whether we are led to believe them or choose to reject them!

The question addressed to Paul by a trembling jailor in Philippi, therefore, remains the most important question that anyone can ask and which everyone must answer: *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:30b) The Pharisees and philosophers of Paul’s day turned people to themselves and their own works for the answer to that question. Society today likewise turns people to themselves and their own works. This does not work—it never has and it never will! The answer is and can be found only in the gospel of Christ. As Paul told that jailor: *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household!”* (Acts 16:31) Let us examine why that is the case.

Consider the problem of sin. No one with eyes to see and ears to hear can deny the presence of sin in this world. Look at the genocide going on in China against the Uyghurs, the repression of minorities by the military government in Myanmar, or the camps filled with political prisoners in North Korea. Listen to the reports on fentanyl deaths, school shootings, child pornography, and domestic violence here in the United States. We are surrounded by sin on every side, but that is not all. Evaluate your own thoughts, words, and actions in view of God’s holiness and on the basis of the demands of God’s perfect law. God does not measure sinfulness on a scale of one to ten. No, He speaks of absolutely no sin versus any sin. Consider the words of James: *“Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all!”* (Jam. 2:10) Consider Ezekiel’s stark observation: *“The soul who sins shall die!”* (Eze. 18:20a) The consequence of sin—any sin—is death, something no one ultimately can deny!

There is only one solution for sin. That solution is not found in human beings themselves or in their works, for as Paul explains later in Romans: *“By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His (that is, in God’s) sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin”* (Rom.3:20). Jesus alone has the power to deal with this world’s sins—including our sin. He alone was able to counter and then defeat sin’s master—Satan. Jesus alone was able to live a life free of sin—perfect in every way, and then by grace exchange His righteousness for our sinfulness. Jesus alone was able to pay the penalty that this world deserved, for He alone could offer the blood of God in sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. This radical plan of God is the power unto salvation, for when Jesus died and then arose again God declared a world of sinners justified—righteous in His sight...freed from sin...and freed from the penalty of sin—death. These blessings become ours and any human beings when the Spirit of God leads us and anyone to believe.

It does not matter who you are. Paul spoke of *“Jews” and “Greeks”* (non-Jews). Today, we are privileged through our membership in the CLC to be involved in mission programs on six continents. The gospel message is powerful, for it has addressed the sin-problem of every nation and every people-group. The gospel proclaims Jesus Christ as the world’s Savior through whom we become right with God and by whom we gain the promise of everlasting life! Yes, **LET US NEVER**

**BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...**

II.

...and **in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith!** It was these words in particular, that came to mean so much to a repentant sinner. While God's law demands a righteousness human beings cannot produce, God's gospel gives human beings a righteousness that will stand up under the inspection of God on the final day of judgment, for it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself! Paul explains the situation later in Romans when he writes: *"Through one Man's righteous act (that man being Jesus Christ) the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life...(and) by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous"* (Rom. 5:18b, 19b). Paul explains that even as Abraham believed in God's gospel promises and his faith *"was accounted to him for righteousness"* (Rom. 4:3b). This is true for everyone who is led by the Spirit to place their trust in Jesus. By faith the justified and righteous sinner is brought into the family of God—declared to be both a child of his heavenly Father and an heir of heaven (cf. Gal. 3:26-29).

That gift of righteousness, Paul then says, *"is revealed from faith to faith."* The exact meaning of that phrase is debated by students of the Bible. Some suggest that Paul is simply saying that our salvation is gained by faith—from beginning to end! While that is certainly a Scriptural thought, I do not believe that is what Paul is saying. The phrase literally means: *"is revealed out of faith into faith."* God's plan for your salvation is to give you the gift of righteousness through your faith in Jesus Christ. Your faith was worked by the Spirit of God at some time in the past either through the sacrament of baptism or through the preaching of the gospel word. God has chosen us, His children, to play an important role in His kingdom's expansion. Even as many of your parents and mine brought us to baptism...even as someone shared with you the gospel word, even so God would have you and me share the word with others. *"From...(or) out of"* the faith of others, therefore, came the actions which the Spirit of God then used to bring faith into our hearts. As we are then by faith motivated to share His gospel with others, the Spirit is working to place faith in those other hearts.

Paul tells us later in Romans: *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Rom.10:9-10). He then tells us in 2 Corinthians 5 that *"we are ambassadors for Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:20). We are to implore others to know and believe the fact that God has reconciled the world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are privileged to share a message of hope and certain salvation—a message that has touched our hearts as we come to grieve over our sins, but rejoice in the gift of God's forgiveness and the righteousness which is ours by faith.

Dear friends, today is your Mission Festival. On this day we are reminded once again of our calling to make disciples of all nations and to share the gospel with every creature! Even as Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, **LET US NEVER BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST! It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes! In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith!** May we in faith be led to share our faith as God gives us opportunity, so that the blessings of that gospel may we experienced and enjoyed by all! Amen.

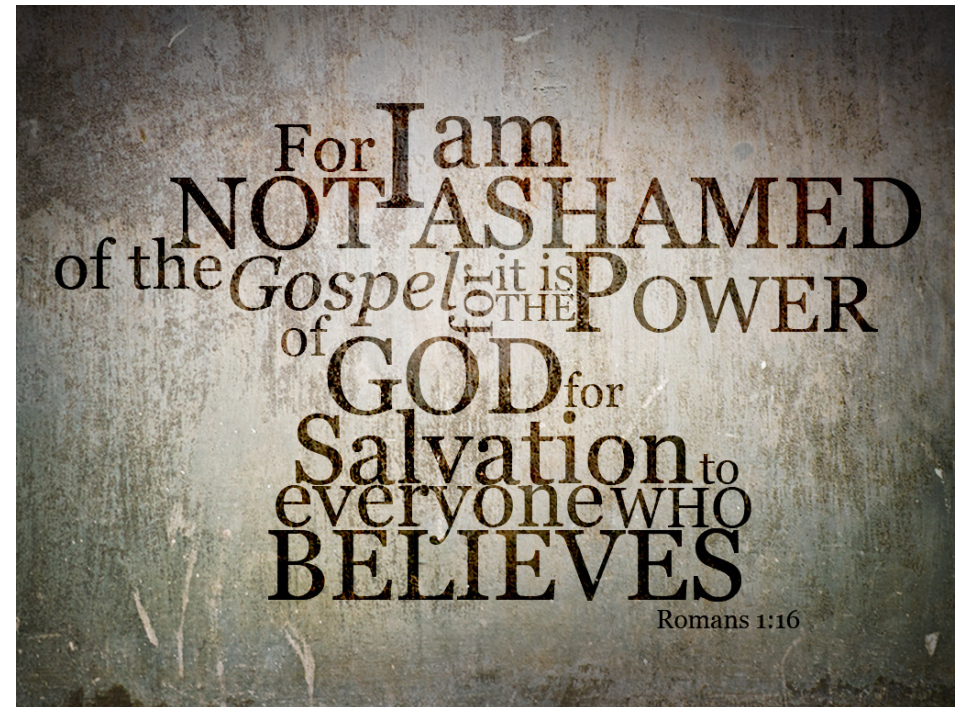
Paul D. Nolting  
To God alone be glory!

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**ESV (Isaiah 61:1-11)** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. <sup>5</sup> Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; <sup>6</sup> but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. <sup>7</sup> Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. <sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup> Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

**ESV (Matthew 22:1-13)** And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, <sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, <sup>3</sup> and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup> Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."' <sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. <sup>7</sup> The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' <sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup> "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. <sup>12</sup> And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

**NKJ (Romans 1:16-17)** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."



# ST PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

# ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Mick Johnson, President Angela Pfennig, Organist  
Michael Roehl, Pastor

**Mission Festival Sunday – October 1, 2023**

## The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

## The Opening Hymn – 773 (Brown Hymnal)

"Rise, Shine, You People!"

## The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

## The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

**The First Lesson:** (Isaiah 61:1-11) When the blessings of our Lord fill our hearts, in particular the joy of knowing that our debt of sin has been paid in full by our Savior Jesus, how can that new man in us not want to share such incredible news with all who will hear. As Isaiah here reminds us, each of us has been commissioned to share the good news of sins forgiven through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

## Psalm 96 (Supplement page 26) (Brown Hymnal)

**The Second Lesson:** (Matthew 22:1-13) Certainly the gospel we have been called to share is the best of all news. It is also the news every sinner desperately needs to hear. Now, perhaps more than ever before, there is a need to accurately communicate exactly what the Bible teaches about sin and grace, guilt and forgiveness. The proper wedding garment mentioned by Jesus in our second reading is the robe of righteousness imputed or credited to us through faith in Jesus Christ. No one will enter heaven based on his own merit or goodness. This too the world needs to hear.

## Hymns by St Paul Duet

### The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed – page 15. (Brown Hymnal)

### The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 346 (Red Hymnal)

"Jesus! and Shall It Ever Be"

### The Sermon – Text: Romans 1:16-17 (Printed on the back of this bulletin)

**"Let Us Never Be Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!"**

### The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

### The Post-Sermon Hymn – 770 (Brown Hymnal)

"I Hear the Savior Calling"

## The Prayers

## The Benediction

### The Closing Hymn – 502 (Red Hymnal)

"Saints of God, the Dawn Is Brightening"

## Silent Prayer

**Welcome!** - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States and around the world. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again.

## Attendance – Sunday (32) Average (43)

### This Week at St. Paul:

<b>Today</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Mission Festival Worship Service
	<b>-11:20 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Meal
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>-6:00 p.m.</b>	– Confirmation Class
	<b>-7:00 p.m.</b>	– Midweek Bible Class
<b>Next Sunday</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Worship Service w/Holy Communion
	<b>-11:15 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Hour

**CLC News** – Pastor Neal Radichel is considering the call to Messiah of Eau Claire. Kate Sauers, wife of Pastor Rob Sauers, has been diagnosed with cancer. Your prayers are requested.

**Mission Festival** – This morning we celebrate our fall Mission Festival. Our guest speaker is Pastor Paul Nolting, who recently accepted a call to serve as parttime missionary to Tanzania. We encourage all to join us for the fellowship meal scheduled to follow the service.

**Baby Shower** – A baby shower is planned for Hope Meyer for Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. Please see the invitation on the serving table in the church kitchen. The baby shower will be followed by a Women's Fellowship meeting. See Cindy Ollenburger with any questions.

**Wednesday Classes** – Please note that we have returned to our normal Wednesday schedule with Confirmation at 6pm and midweek Bible Study at 7pm.

**Christmas Flowers** – Ready or not, it's time to prepare our annual order for Christmas flowers. Please consult the sign-up sheet on the mailbox table, or address any questions to Sandy Roehl.