

“Found People Find People” - Romans 10.12-15 – Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

On this World Communion Sunday, we focus on the Good News not just being for us but for all the world. Do you remember the words of John 3:16? *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life.* Remember that, *God so loved the world...* And though we will lift up prayers for people around the world and take an offering for students around the world, the message today focuses on how we impact our world for Jesus. In the lesson from scripture today, the Apostle Paul did it by writing a letter to the believers in the capital city of the Roman Empire – Rome. Though he was born and raised a Jew, who was taught to despise anyone who was not a Jew, but he was also a Roman citizen. And the Romans, like many cultures, perceived that they were the dominant power in their world because they were better than all other people. Paul explains that it is not the differences that define us but the unifying faith that Jesus Christ is Lord and Christ is Lord of all - that unites us.

The message today is about how we who were lost have been found. And now that we are found we are to go find others. Jim and Jennifer Cowert in their book *“Living the Five”* talk about what they had discovered in growing their church - ***Found People Find People***. As we strive to grow this church, I believe it is helpful to glean wisdom from others. Throughout the year I will share several Evangelistic messages to help us grow. Please know that just like us in this post-pandemic period many churches have seen reductions in worship attendance of 50% or more. And some are near to the point of closing their doors.

Before I forget it, there is also a message in this lesson about calling people to become preachers – and that includes answering the call to become licensed or ordained pastors, but it also might be inclusive of laity who are called to go and spread the good news as lay people. I am appreciative of all the gifted and vital lay people of this church. Paul not only wrote letters but he also travelled as a missionary to go and tell others about Jesus. And here he lifts up that he cannot be everywhere at once and that more are needed to go and find people with whom to share the Good News. Jesus put it this way, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”* (Matthew 9:38) Today, let us pray, that people will hear the call and positively respond.

For the earliest church the struggle between “us and them” was for the “Jews and Greeks” or sometimes it is referenced as Jews and Gentiles. Paul is adamant, here and in other letters and his story as it is told in the book of Acts. As we heard this morning, *There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord is Lord of all,* (Romans 10.12a) Please note that Jesus is not just Lord of all believers, Jesus is Lord of all.

Just like the ancient Romans and the Jews, we too, live in a world than more often than not seems very divided. Think about it for a moment, who are the “us and them” today?

White and Non-white

Liberals and Conservatives

Rich and Poor

Straight and Gay

Republicans and Democrats

For Paul, Jesus came to overcome separation – the separation of people from God and also the divisions and prejudices that separated all of God's people. This was done, as he wrote to the

Romans because, *Jesus is Lord of all*. (Let me put in a plug for my Bible study on the Book of Romans. It is never too late to join – this week we will be looking at chapter 5. Join us.) How might Jesus help us overcome divisions today? Having watched people rescuing and saving people from flood waters caused by hurricanes, or other disasters, we see how people come together in rescue efforts. We have seen on the news people in boats rescuing people stranded on their roofs or teams of people digging through piles of rubble from collapsed buildings rescuing those who are trapped and setting them free. For the early church, there was a sense that they had a mission to rescue those who were “lost” because they were not followers of Jesus. Might we see our church as a rescue mission, to reach out with a loving life-line to those who are trapped. We are called to connect others to Jesus and to the body of Jesus-followers that includes us all. In a moment as we prepare for communion today, we remember that Jesus invites all to the table. In a couple weeks we will look at how we might invite people to come to a Homecoming Party.

In the Gospel of John and the Book of Acts there are a couple stories of the Apostle Philip who when he first finds Jesus goes and finds his friend Nathaniel and invites him to come meet him. And then after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit sends Philip to go over to the chariot of a man from Ethiopia. From these examples, the Cowarts relate how we can be the found people who find people. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit nudging you to go and talk to someone or to go and invite someone. Who needs to be found today? Find yourself in the right time and the right place this week. Alleluia and Amen.

It's Found People Who Find People

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 9/25/23

It's found people who find people,
And bring them to the Lord,
That those who are lost might be found,
And their lives be restored.

For in this world of sin and death,
A world of pain and strife,
To us as people who have been lost,
Christ brings to us new life.

Long ago Christ called disciples,
And now Jesus calls us.
We're now sent out and called to go,
To bring others to Jesus.