

“Glory to the Lord” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 19 October 4, 2026

- I. **Matthew 5:14-16** – ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- II. **I have always found mission and mission work inspiring.**
 - a. During my time at seminary, I had many required classes, but many of my elective courses were mission related.
 - b. A wonderful, wise professor named Hank Rowold taught me about the different facets of mission work, and his insights are still with me to this day.
 - i. For one, he reminded me that God is a sending God... As the Father sent the Son... and the Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit... and Jesus empowered the disciples by the Holy Spirit and sent them... all to bring the Gospel or Good News of Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins to the nations.
 - ii. Professor Rowold also explained that God is a searching God... and from the very beginning of creation, when Adam and Eve rebelled and brought sin into the world and hid in shame, the Lord asked, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9)
 1. From that point on, God would continue to seek out and find His people, bringing to them the salvation promised through Jesus.
 - iii. Finally, Professor Rowold drew an illustration on the chalk board that followed Acts 1:8, as Jesus says you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the world... and starting with Jerusalem, he made concentric circles outward.
 1. Then he said, wherever your church is, that is your Jerusalem, now, draw the circles outward... and if each church did that... do you see the web of mission minded circles that crosses over each other and connects people to the Gospel?
 - c. Here at Ascension, we have been incredibly blessed with our former Pastor, Dennis Bohren emphasizing mission and outreach as our primary responsibility... while inviting all people to come and experience the gifts of God in our worship services.
 - i. For many years, we spent significant time, energy, and finances going on mission trips all around the world – to places like Mexico, Haiti, India, Guatemala... along with New Orleans, Fargo, Joplin, and closer to home in Tonasket, Washington and even closer, Vernonia.
 - ii. During each of these mission trips, we spent time providing vacation Bible school or rebuilding structures and supporting people in their loss, along with handing out Bibles and praying with people.

- iii. It is an amazing blessing to be a part of a team that connects with other Christians in that “web of mission” as we reach the corners of the globe.
 - d. Yet, many of you could not always go on these mission trips, as most of them included difficult conditions... physical labor, running around with children, foreign foods, and just the strain of travel.
 - i. Therefore, we always called upon you to support the trips from here in Jerusalem, or Ascension, and pray, prepare the needed supplies for the journey, and give financially.
 - ii. For our last mission trip to Guatemala, we had 14 people on the team and 9 were bilingual and 6 under age 25.
 - 1. We needed to bring Bibles, story of salvation bracelets, Vacation Bible School crafts, soccer balls and other games, and so much more.
 - 2. All of this was expensive, and it took a ton of time and resources... which of course people ask whether it is all worth it or not... I suppose in the end, God knows what the Gospel is worth, and what lengths He went to in order that we share it.

III. **Our readings today reflect mission and the work of the LWML.**

- a. Lutheran Women’s Missionary League has always been a support to the mission of the Church, and very often leads from behind.
 - i. They are constantly raising that much needed funding so mission can take place from our Jerusalems to the rest of the community, region, and world.
- b. Jesus is just beginning His first major teaching to the crowds in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - i. He starts with the Beatitudes, or blessings, and then follows with what we read today... starting with the troubles we face for witnessing about Jesus, yet we are to be salt and light.
 - ii. Don’t forget, we are not salt and light because we are special... it is only the fact that God has poured His Spirit into us and made us new that we can shine the light of His glory outward.
 - iii. Jesus is describing our change by grace through faith... that allows us to reflect God’s light into the darkness of the world.
- c. Our trouble is that we don’t always see the urgency or the importance of getting the Good News to our community, our region, or the world.
 - i. Our lives are segmented into schedules and times – it’s time to wake up, it’s time to eat, it’s time for reading Scripture or praying, it’s time to work or run errands, it’s time to read or watch TV, it’s time to go to church.
 - ii. In any given day, we have a schedule in our heads that tells us what time it is... but we don’t realize that our mission is God’s mission – to seek and save the lost!

1. Now I am not saying that we need to go into full-time church work or something, because it is a vocation like all of you have.
2. However, what I'm getting at is that being salt and light in the world is the very purpose you are here – that your entire schedule and life are, in fact, a living schedule or vocation.
3. Just as Pastor Greg Finke points out in his book, "Joining Jesus on His Mission," every single part of our day is just looking for the ways Jesus is already at work and joining Him to be that light that brings God glory.
4. Rather than schedule a mission trip to somehow schedule being light... how about just naturally be the light you are by God's grace in your neighborhood, at the grocery store in line, at restaurants, taking walks, and just going through your daily schedule.
- d. All of this is to say that we as a church too often think reaching out with God's love is a requirement that we need to put on the schedule, but Jesus wants our lives to revolve around who He is... and by extension... who we are.

- IV. **You see, Jesus became the light** so that we could become light for Him.
- a. Jesus is the Light of the world... coming right into our darkness to forgive our sins, to show the power and glory of the kingdom of heaven, and to call us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9).
 - b. Yet, He was thrown into the darkness of betrayal, arrest, death on a cross... and His body was put in the darkness of a tomb.
 - i. That death became the atonement, the sacrifice for Adam and Eve's rebellion and sin... that we all have in us... none can escape this curse and the darkness it causes.
 - c. But the Scriptures also give us the great victory story of the resurrection, as three days later the Light of the world rose again... as not even the grave could keep Him from shining forth.
 - d. Jesus did these things so He could pass them on to you... to me... and all people by grace through faith.
 - e. Again the Scriptures tell us of a day when we will not have darkness or need of light because in the new Jerusalem, God will be our light. (Revelation 22:5)

- V. **These promises and blessings are ours** – because we heard the Gospel!
- a. Someone in our past... be it a missionary... a Sunday School teacher... a pastor... a neighbor... or a family member gave us the Good News of our salvation in Christ.
 - b. That is the goal and mission of the Lutheran Women in Mission, and that is also ours as we are sent to seek and save the lost.

- c. We are light because Jesus did the work... and we now partake in witnessing how the Lord is good... and as we live for Him, God's glory shines.
- d. All glory to the Lord, whose light shines in... and through us. Amen.