

CALLED TO PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF GOD

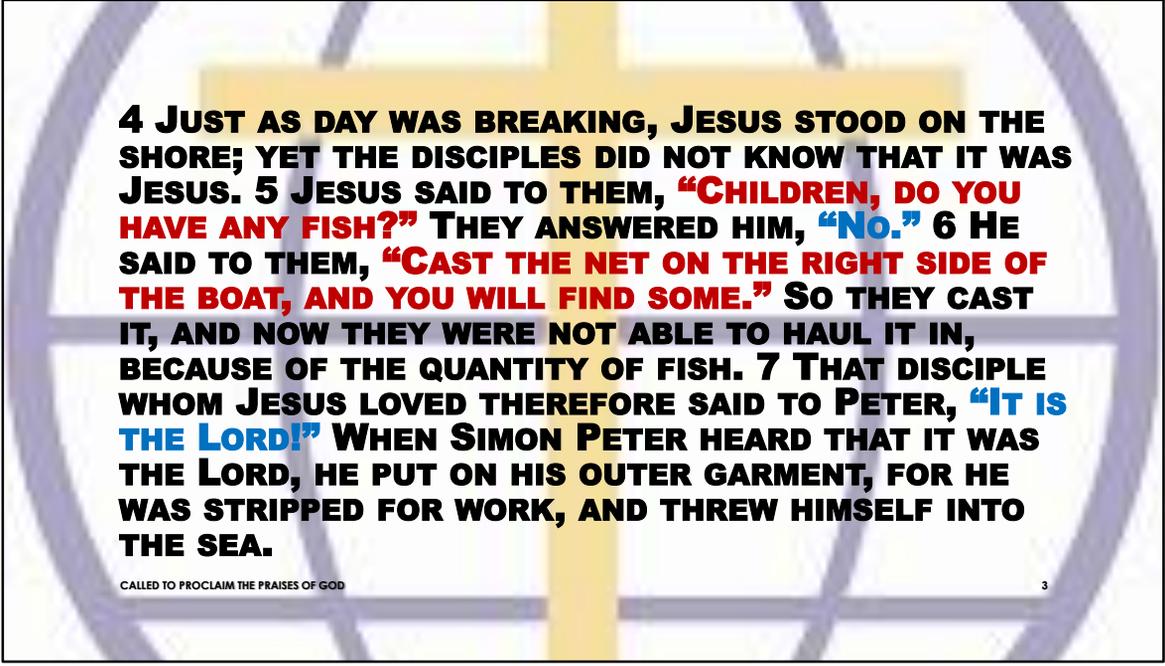
**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour**

Date: May 5, 2019

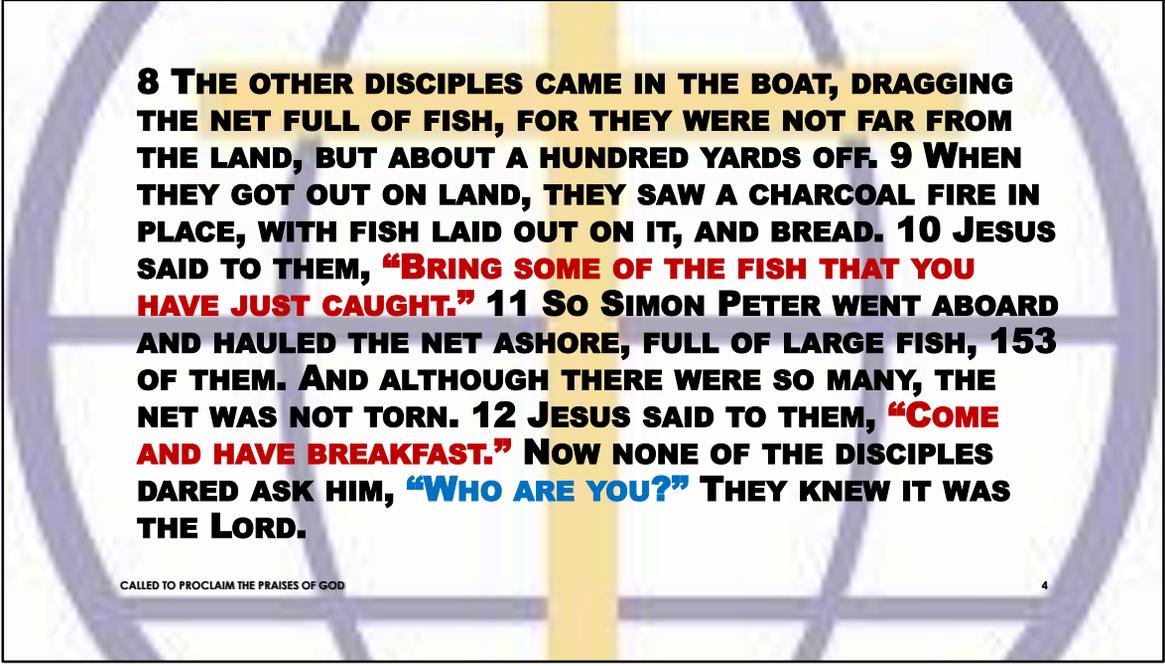
**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

**JOHN 21:1-
19 (ESV)**

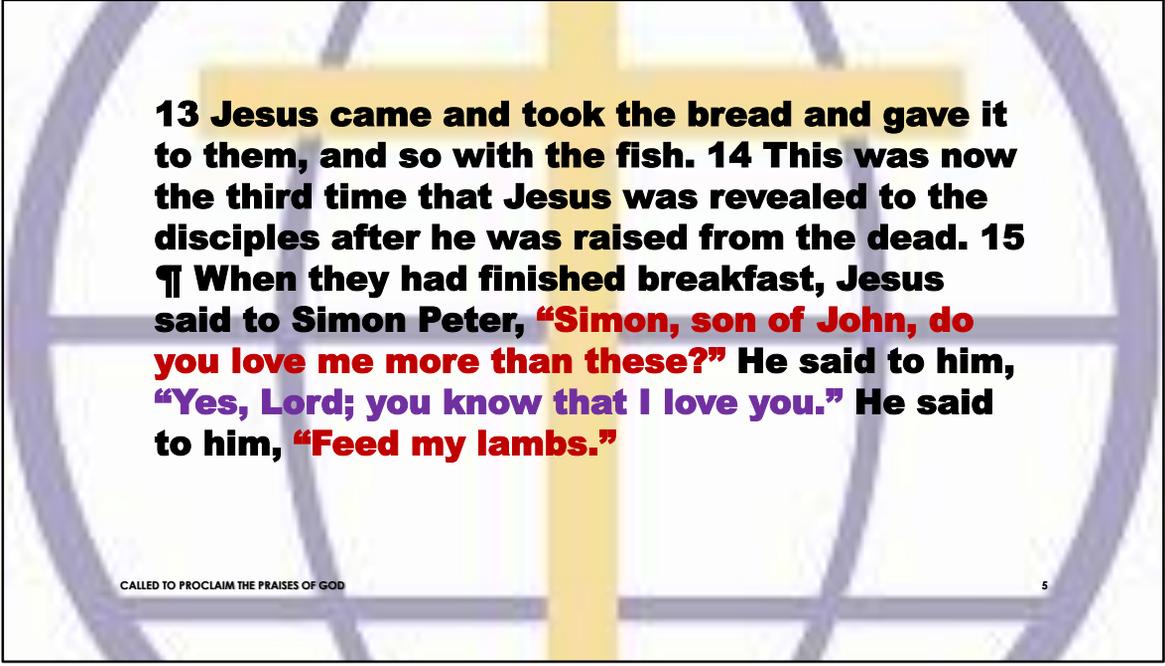
“1 ¶ AFTER THIS JESUS REVEALED HIMSELF AGAIN TO THE DISCIPLES BY THE SEA OF TIBERIAS, AND HE REVEALED HIMSELF IN THIS WAY. 2 SIMON PETER, THOMAS (CALLED THE TWIN), NATHANAEL OF CANA IN GALILEE, THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE, AND TWO OTHERS OF HIS DISCIPLES WERE TOGETHER. 3 SIMON PETER SAID TO THEM, “I AM GOING FISHING.” THEY SAID TO HIM, “WE WILL GO WITH YOU.” THEY WENT OUT AND GOT INTO THE BOAT, BUT THAT NIGHT THEY CAUGHT NOTHING.



4 JUST AS DAY WAS BREAKING, JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE; YET THE DISCIPLES DID NOT KNOW THAT IT WAS JESUS. 5 JESUS SAID TO THEM, “CHILDREN, DO YOU HAVE ANY FISH?” THEY ANSWERED HIM, “No.” 6 HE SAID TO THEM, “CAST THE NET ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT, AND YOU WILL FIND SOME.” SO THEY CAST IT, AND NOW THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO HAUL IT IN, BECAUSE OF THE QUANTITY OF FISH. 7 THAT DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED THEREFORE SAID TO PETER, “IT IS THE LORD!” WHEN SIMON PETER HEARD THAT IT WAS THE LORD, HE PUT ON HIS OUTER GARMENT, FOR HE WAS STRIPPED FOR WORK, AND THREW HIMSELF INTO THE SEA.



8 THE OTHER DISCIPLES CAME IN THE BOAT, DRAGGING THE NET FULL OF FISH, FOR THEY WERE NOT FAR FROM THE LAND, BUT ABOUT A HUNDRED YARDS OFF. 9 WHEN THEY GOT OUT ON LAND, THEY SAW A CHARCOAL FIRE IN PLACE, WITH FISH LAID OUT ON IT, AND BREAD. 10 JESUS SAID TO THEM, “BRING SOME OF THE FISH THAT YOU HAVE JUST CAUGHT.” 11 SO SIMON PETER WENT ABOARD AND HAULED THE NET ASHORE, FULL OF LARGE FISH, 153 OF THEM. AND ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SO MANY, THE NET WAS NOT TORN. 12 JESUS SAID TO THEM, “COME AND HAVE BREAKFAST.” NOW NONE OF THE DISCIPLES DARED ASK HIM, “WHO ARE YOU?” THEY KNEW IT WAS THE LORD.

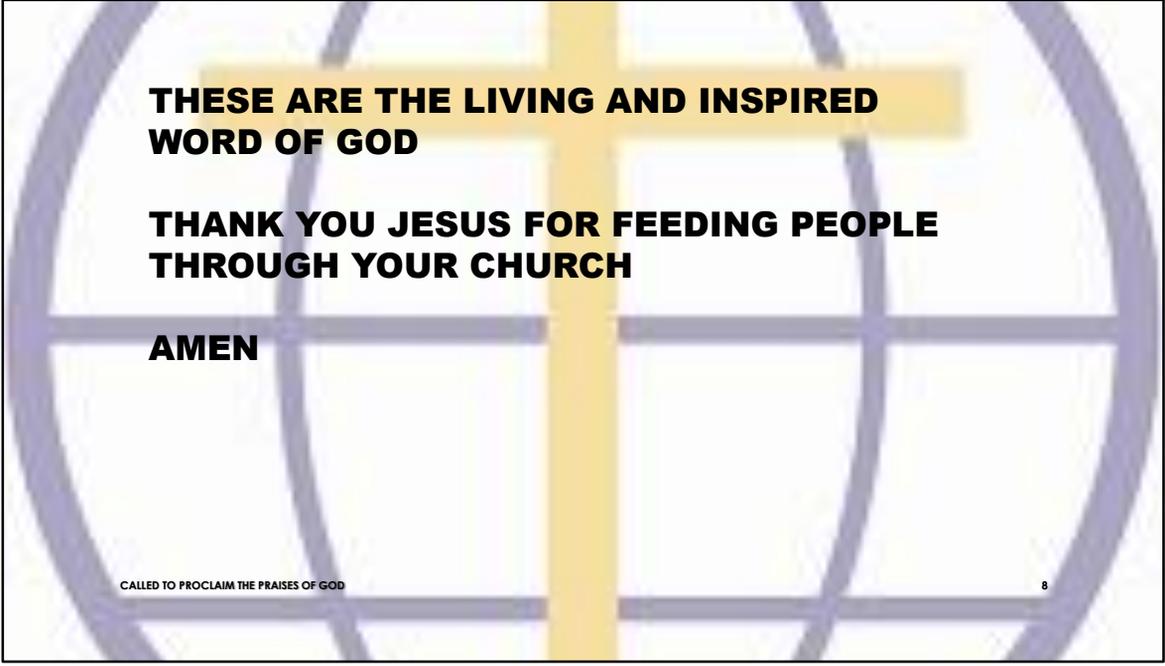


13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. 15 ¶ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

- **16 HE SAID TO HIM A SECOND TIME, “SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?” HE SAID TO HIM, “YES, LORD; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.” HE SAID TO HIM, “TEND MY SHEEP.” 17 HE SAID TO HIM THE THIRD TIME, “SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?” PETER WAS GRIEVED BECAUSE HE SAID TO HIM THE THIRD TIME, “DO YOU LOVE ME?” AND HE SAID TO HIM, “LORD, YOU KNOW EVERYTHING; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.” JESUS SAID TO HIM, “FEED MY SHEEP.**



18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”” (Joh 21:1-19 ESV)



**THESE ARE THE LIVING AND INSPIRED
WORD OF GOD**

**THANK YOU JESUS FOR FEEDING PEOPLE
THROUGH YOUR CHURCH**

AMEN

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8

As we think of the Scriptures we have just read, let us think about the attitude of the resurrected Jesus towards his disciples all of whom had deserted him at the cross except for the apostle John.

Let us also think about the commission Jesus gave to Peter.

As we think of Jesus, we need to keep in mind that Jesus is in constant relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, God being one. The attitude that we see in Jesus towards his disciples is the exact same attitude God the Father and the Holy Spirit have towards one another and towards us.

As we think of the Scriptures, it cannot be stressed enough the grandeur of the mission of Jesus to this earth.

The well-known Scripture in John 3: 16-18 tells us a great deal about God's attitude towards us.

“16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (Joh 3:16-18 ESV)

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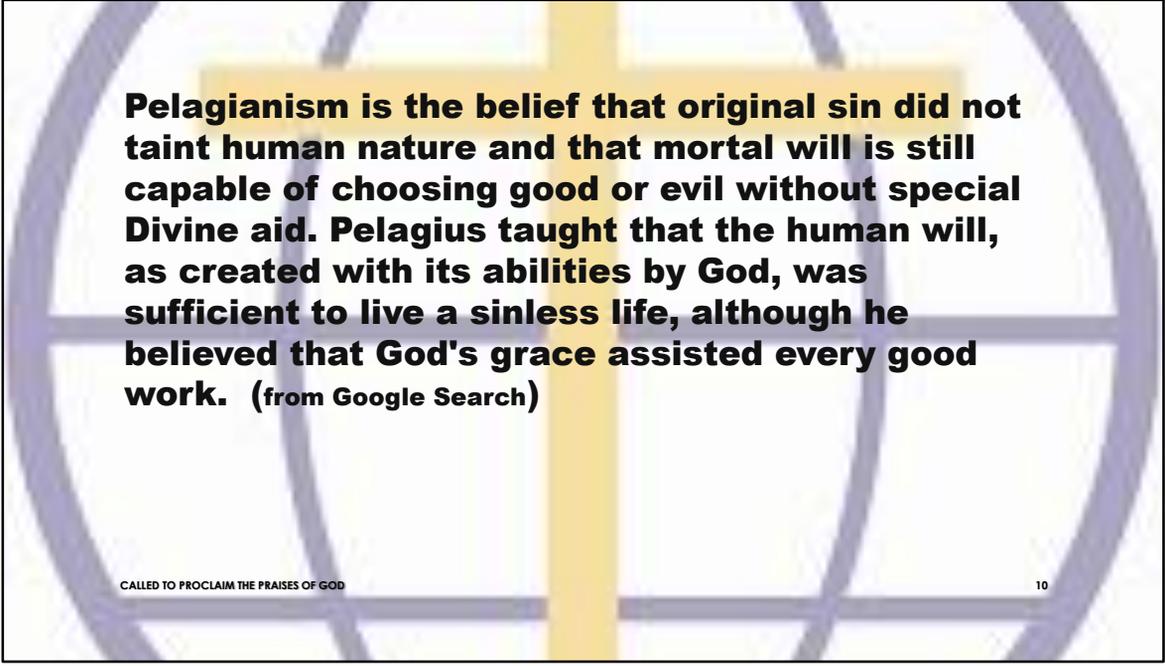
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God the Father gave his eternal Son not to condemn the world but to save the world. We see that God came towards us in love to save us because of the sad state of affairs that we find ourselves in.

True Christianity is very different from the world religions. God initiates contact with us and not us with him. In all the religions of the world, people have to earn God's love. Not so with true Christianity.

Every human being is tainted by sin. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, as the apostle Paul tells us in the epistle to the Romans. Every one of us stood alienated and condemned to death because of sin which is trying to function independently from God.

There is a heresy called the Pelagian heresy which is very much alive in our world today. It basically says that righteousness is within the reach of our will.



Pelagianism is the belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special Divine aid. Pelagius taught that the human will, as created with its abilities by God, was sufficient to live a sinless life, although he believed that God's grace assisted every good work. (from Google Search)

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God's great desire for humanity is that everyone would be saved and come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9). We know God is not calling everyone at this time but he is calling people in his church to proclaim how glorious and how loving God is. We have the privilege of knowing what Jesus has done on behalf of humanity and the privilege of trusting in him for our salvation.

The important point to remember that becoming right with God is impossible on our own. God must intervene to make us right with him and He did it through Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus has intervened for all humanity already and he has reconciled humanity to himself. (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.)

The apostle Peter tells us in his epistle to the exiled people he was writing to that **they were a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that they might proclaim the excellencies of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.**

This describes the people of God in Peter's day and describes the people of God in our day.

The apostle Peter tells them that they were not God's people but now they are. There was a time when they did not receive mercy but now they had received mercy from God. We can read about this special calling of the church in 1 Peter 2:9-10. These verses describe God's church back then and today.

God's people are called for a mission to proclaim the greatness of God. This is the calling of the church today as it has been in every generation before.

If we go back to the verses we have just read in the gospel of John, we see the resurrected Jesus who had appeared to his disciples as a group twice before. This was the third time he appeared to them. The entire group was not there. This time, Jesus appeared to seven altogether (verse 2).

As we read of this appearance of Jesus, we see the love he has for his disciples. They did not expect to see Jesus early in the morning as they did not recognize him at first.

The disciples had gone fishing and had not caught anything. When Jesus intervened, their catch of fish was miraculous.

This is reminiscent of Luke chapter 5 when they had gone fishing and had caught nothing. Jesus told them to lay down their net on the other side of the boat. They caught so many fish that their nets were breaking. In fact, there was so many fish that they filled their boats to a point where they were in danger of sinking.

Jesus then told them what they would become in the future. **"9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.' 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."** (Lu 5:9-11 ESV).

Going back to John 21, Jesus had obviously reassured the disciples when he had met them as he revealed himself to them once resurrected.

When Peter was told by John that Jesus was at the shore, he ran towards Jesus excited to be in his presence.

We see the warmth of Jesus towards them. He prepared them breakfast. Jesus is the ultimate loving servant.

The apostles were to be part of the foundation of the church along with the prophets as we read in Ephesians chapter 2. Jesus is himself the cornerstone, the head of the

church.

They were chosen and sent forth with the message of the gospel. The word apostle simply means **“a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders”** (Strong’s Concordance).

It is good news that Jesus has invaded the kingdom of this world, defeated it to replace it with the kingdom of God. Jesus gave many parables of what the kingdom of God is like. In one parable he said, **“He told them another parable. ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.’ (Matt 13:33 ESV).** The kingdom of God, even if it commenced small, one day will completely replace the kingdom of this world. It will be the only kingdom! Speed that day! (Revelation 21.)

There is no better news than this.

Peter and the other apostles were to be made fishers of men. This is a continuing function of the church.

God chose the most unlikely men on which to build his church.

By meeting with them, Jesus completely change their lives. When Jesus asked Simon (Peter) three times if he loved him, Jesus told him three times to take care and to feed God’s sheep, of God’s people.

Because we are part of the body of Jesus, we are called to proclaim this good news just as the people exiled in Turkey and Asia were at the time of the apostle Peter.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1Pe 2:9 ESV)

1) to tell out or forth 2) to declare abroad, divulge, publish 3) to make known by praising or proclaiming, to celebrate (Strong’s Concordance)

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11

All of God's people have been called to participate in proclaiming the great miracle that God has done for all humanity.

We need to realize that we do not convert anyone. God does the conversion. Our responsibility is to proclaim, to make known.

Not unlike the people the apostle Peter was addressing in his letter, we are also exiled or foreigners as we live in society. Our primary allegiance is to God himself. We live in this world but we are citizen of another kingdom, the kingdom of God.

We can share the good news that all sins are forgiven at the cross. God has made everything new in Jesus. The responsibility of any human being is to believe it once the Holy Spirit opens our mind.

This is a huge saying that all sins are forgiven because as human beings, we do not think that this possible. It is hard to believe that Jesus has dealt with all sins at the cross.

Only God can rectify and make right the human heart. He does it by giving us a brand

new heart, by giving us a brand new life. This life is available to anyone. It is an unmerited gift of God. It becomes a reality in our life when we believe.

Everyone is included in Christ although everyone is not yet united to Christ.

Who could ever think that the apostle Peter could be made right with God. He had betrayed the Creator of the universe. Peter, in fear for his own life, had completely abandoned and denied God. He had told Jesus that he would never deny him but he did!

He denied Jesus at a crucial moment just before Jesus would suffer the brutality of the crucifixion. When he realized what he had done, he cried bitterly. He realized what he had done when Jesus looked at him. Peter was then reminded of Jesus' words. **"61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.' 62 And he went out and wept bitterly." (Lu 22:61-62 ESV).**

After the resurrection, it was Jesus who sought Peter to reassure him. **"But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." (Mr 16:7 ESV).**

It was God who changed Peter's heart. He gave him a new life and boldness to proclaim the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection.

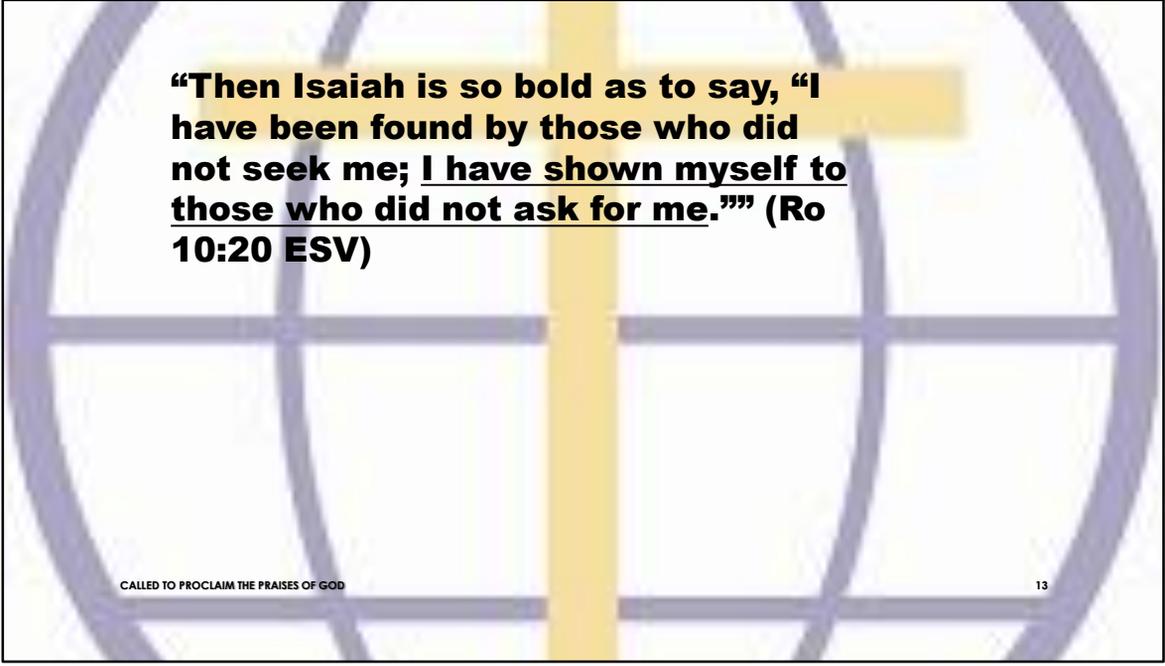
Jesus was going to ascend to heaven. The apostles and the church would be left on earth to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. They proclaimed the message and **God added to the church. "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Ac 2:47 ESV)**

"12 ¶ Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women," (Ac 5:12-14 ESV)

God continues to add to His church today. Faith comes through hearing of the word. How will they hear?

Paul has some very interesting words in Romans.

“14 But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Ro 10:14-17 ESV)



“Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”” (Ro 10:20 ESV)

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13

This is certainly true of our society also. There are many who do not seek God. God shows himself to people who do not seek him. In Romans 10 and 11, Paul is talking about the Israelites and the hope that he still has for them. It is very true that the Gentiles were not looking for Jesus. Jesus shows himself to people by the Holy Spirit in many ways one of which is through the sharing of this good news.

The good news is found in God’s word.

I also believe that GCI has a good understanding and is putting forth and declaring the good news of the gospel. Through the headquarters church, God is inspiring Mr. Greg Williams in encouraging us to find ways local congregations can share this good news with others.

The love of God shed in our hearts does not stop in our hearts but is to flow to other people.

God has given us the great gift of understanding the difference between the old and new covenant. Along with other Christians in other denominations, he has also given us the gift of the revelation of the love of the triune God and his desire to include us in

his godly perfect relationship through the perfect man Jesus.

He has given us the gift of knowing his Son, Jesus.

We are not many here in Moncton. We are not very influential and very strong. In fact, we are very weak. Most of us are elderly. It does not mean that we have to be inactive.

I realize that you are all examples in your private lives of the grace given to you by Jesus Christ. But as a congregation, we have beautiful instruments to share this good news of the gospel through very well-written pamphlets given to us by the headquarters church.

I encourage all who can and are inclined to pray and ask God to give us the passionate desire to share this good news with others. One simple way we can begin is by delivering these pamphlets/booklets in people's mailboxes. We can sow seed. God gives the growth. We are not in charge of the outcome. God is. Once a farmer puts seed into the soil, the outcome is out of his control. He cannot make the seed grow. Once it begins to grow, he takes care of it by weeding, etc...

Once God's gives the growth, we can participate in His work of teaching, making disciples.

God will show himself to whom he wants to show himself at this time.

This is very simple way of declaring publicly the greatness and excellencies of our God.

Let us take the time to read quickly the good news found in the pamphlets, **"YOU'RE INCLUDED!**

Again, our responsibility is to sow. God is the one who makes it grow. We have the example of what God did through the apostle Peter and the other apostles. Through a handful of mostly unknown men and women called by God, the church grew and continues to grow. Through various means, it is reaching the ends of the earth with this good news of the gospel. We have the good news of Matthew 28:18 "18 ... **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**" (Mt 28:18-20 ESV).

I strongly believe and I know we have the truth of the gospel found in Jesus that we can share.

Let us pray!