

The Day of Pentecost - a Mission Festival

Sermon Road Map

Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Colossians 1:3-8

June 9, 2019

Pentecost calls and equips you to share God's pure grace.

- ❖ Pastor Ham wondered: *How can I help my people from prison?*
 - A Hmong village leader in north Vietnam - originally a shaman
 - Conscience bothered providing empty religious practices
 - Needed something better. Heard a Christian radio broadcast
 - ♦ Traveled to a nearby village. Heard the word. It created faith in him.
 - Shared the word - church gathered - local officials scared
 - ♦ Pastor Ham imprisoned, interrogated, beaten, isolated
 - ♦ Government goal: have him renounce his faith. He didn't.
 - ♦ Concerned about his people. They were in danger.
 - ♦ Officials couldn't imprison the word of grace. God sustained them.
 - ❖ Paul could identify. How could he help God's people from prison?
 - Paul knew beatings and abuse - attempts to silence him
 - Threatened by leaders hostile to Jesus, he was arrested for his safety
 - He was held captive. Leaders wanted bribes and to pacify local leaders
 - Paul appealed to Rome - kept there under house arrest - total 7 years
 - How could he help God's people and spread the gospel while captive?
 - ♦ News came that the new Christians in Colosse were in danger.
 - ♦ Paul wrote this letter - Christ, his work, God's grace is all you need!
- ³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. ⁷ You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.
- ❖ Paul's confidence: *the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...* Romans 1:16
 - The gospel brought them new life. It was still working among them.
 - They heard, understood, and clung to the gospel of *grace alone*.
 - ♦ Forgiveness, new life, salvation are all God's work and free gift.
 - No yes, but strings attached. God did it all and gives it to you freely.
 - ♦ Paul's letter confirmed this is the truth. Remember and stand firm!
 - This gospel was working the same wonders worldwide - not alone

- Pastor Ham didn't yet have this knowledge or confidence while in prison.
 - ♦ While his faith was strengthened there, *what about his people?*
 - ♦ He didn't fully know the grace of God. That was about to change.
 - ♦ Another pastor found a WELS Hmong pastor's sermons on the Internet.
 - ♦ The Hmong Fellowship Church of Vietnam requested training.
 - Growing to know God's grace in Christ changed everything!

"Personally, since I have been receiving training from the WELS, I see a change in myself as well. Before this, I taught and used my own authority in the church. At that time, I thought, "I'm the smart one – I'm the one with training, and I am the one with the authority. I can force my members to do the right thing." But since I have been studying with the Lutheran Church, I have changed. I have reevaluated myself and how I taught in the past – and know that I have taught false teachings. The training made me value my members more – and know that they need the gospel. I used to use the law to motivate my members. That was how I showed my authority. But since receiving this training, I now understand that the law won't help the members. I started to share the gospel and taught them to understand that the gospel will motivate you to love and show care for each other." Pastor Ham

- ❖ Pastor Ham and the FCV have turned to the experts, asking for help to train their 570 pastors, plus elders - to ground their 100,000 members in grace.
 - They are turning to you - experts on *grace alone in Christ alone*.
- ### Pentecost calls and equips you to share God's pure grace.
- Yes, you are experts on *grace alone* - God's word that changes lives.
 - ♦ Unbelievers don't know it. Sadly many Christians don't either!
 - You are experts. Not because you're better!
 - People who rely on God's grace do so knowing their own wickedness.
 - ♦ We confess it every Sunday. We still shock ourselves with wicked and bitter thoughts, cruel hurtful words, selfish motivation & actions.
 - ♦ All springing from trying to be our own lords vs. Jesus as my Lord
 - ♦ If God treated as we deserve: kicked to the curb to catch our bus to hell
 - ♦ **Instead:** God killed his Son, instead of you - instead of me.
 - ♦ God washed you clean in baptism, made you his child, robed in Christ
 - ♦ By God's grace we can live with ourselves with sure hope for heaven
 - 7 Billion people on this planet - best estimates: 1 Billion know Jesus
 - ♦ How can I - 1 expert on *grace* or our little WELS make a difference?
 - ♦ God shows us. He opened the door to Vietnam: *Come help us!* (Acts 16:9)
 - ♦ Our US history with Vietnam makes this even more stunning.
 - God used a Hmong refugee / became a pastor / his Internet sermons
 - Vietnam Vets have gone to Vietnam to help. We have more to offer.
 - Hanoi invited WELS alone to build a Theological Training Center!
 - More than \$1.15 Million has been given. Jesus invites you to help.
 - Now is God's time. Pray, give, pray, watch grace work wonders!