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Epiphany 5 • 1 Corinthians 9:16–23 • February 8, 2015

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Homiletical Helps on LSB Series B—Epistles

Textual Considerations

For the Apostle Paul the proclamation of the gospel was not a basis for boasting on his part but ανάγκη, a matter of necessity, constraint, obligation. “He is under divine constraint which he cannot escape” (TDNT, I, 340). “This is his mission” (TDNT, II, 718). “ευαγγελίζεσθαι is not just speaking or preaching, it is proclamation with authority and power” (TDNT, II, 720).

The content of the gospel—the “good news”—is not spelled out in this text. Other passages in the writings of the Apostle Paul provide the necessary information (e.g., Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 2:2; 6:14; 15:1–4, 20). See also the accounts of the substitutionary life, suffering, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ in the four Gospels.

For Paul original sin prevents the proclamation of the gospel. He considered himself to have been entrusted with a commission, a stewardship, a sacred trust. Paul answered the question: “What’s in it for me?” with the words: “It is the chance to preach the good news free of charge” (1 Cor 9:18, CEV). He also wrote, “I do all things on account of the gospel, so to that I may be συγκοινωνς (a sharer, a partner) of it (το ευαγγελιον)” (1 Cor 9:23).

Paul was “free” ελευθος yet a slave in order that he might win over “the more” (Cf. 2 Cor 3:17).

Paul’s evangelism strategy was designed to meet the people where they were—whether Jews, people under law, people without law, or people who were weak. Yet he did not sacrifice his integrity, but remembered his relationship to his God in Christ Jesus. His aim was by all means to save some.

Liturgical Considerations

A verse from the Introit that is helpful is “Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds delight in his commands.”

In a portion of the Collect the worshipper joins in praying that God the loving Father would enable him to do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

The psalm for the day, Psalm 147, begins and ends with an invitation to the worshipper to “Praise the Lord!”

In Mark 1:38 of the gospel for the day (Mk 1:29–39) Jesus refers to his mission: “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”
Suggested Outline

The Proclamation of the Gospel

I. Not something that can be done
   A. Voluntarily because of original sin
   B. Apart from faith in Jesus Christ

II. Done
   A. Under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit
   B. With explicit references to the gospel

III. Done with integrity
   A. By meeting people where they are
   B. By remembering one’s relationship to God through Jesus Christ

Arthur F. Graudin

Transfiguration • 2 Corinthians 3:12–13 (14–18); 4:1–6 • February 15, 2015

Literary Context

The text is part of the section of 2 Corinthians where Paul is defending the integrity of his apostolic ministry and his past actions in dealing with the believers in Corinth (1:12–7:16). In the section immediately preceding today’s text, 3:7–11, Paul contrasts the ministry of Moses in mediating the Torah to Israel to Paul’s own apostolic ministry of proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ. Both ministries are characterized by glory, but where Moses’s ministry was a ministry of death (3:7), Paul’s is a ministry of the Spirit (3:8). Where Moses’s ministry was a ministry of condemnation, Paul’s is a ministry of righteousness (3:9). Where the old covenant mediated by Moses is being abolished and superseded, the ministry of the gospel of Jesus will remain forever (3:11). The reader/hearer should thus appreciate being a recipient of the new covenant as proclaimed by Paul.

The Text

Verses 3:12–13: The “hope” (ἐλπίδα) to which Paul refers in 3:12 is the hope in the enduring/remaining glory mentioned in the previous sentence (3:11). This is the glory associated with the new covenant. This hope motivates Paul to behave very boldly/frankly/openly (παρθένως) in his ministry. Paul then contrasts his conduct with Moses’s wearing the veil as described in Exodus 34. Commentators do not agree on the particular point Paul is making about Moses’s purpose in wearing the veil. One explanation is that it was to hide from the people how the glory would gradually dissipate from Moses’s face, and then that Paul is suggesting a connection between this and the impermanence of the old covenant. Whatever the purpose of the veil, Paul argues that Moses’s wearing the veil implies that he was concealing something and so it contrasts with Paul’s own openness.

Verses 3:14–18: Paul next uses the figure of the veil to discuss Israel’s present unbelief. As the people of Israel could not see Moses’s face because of the veil, so