

2015

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

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Recommended Citation

Graudin, Arthur (2015) "Epiphany 5 • 1 Corinthians 9:16–23 • February 8, 2015," *Concordia Journal*: Vol. 41: No. 1, Article 7.
Available at: <http://scholar.csl.edu/cj/vol41/iss1/7>

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Homiletical Helps on LSB Series B—Epistles

Editor's note: The following homiletical help is adapted from Concordia Journal, January 2006.

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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). “*εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* 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 *συγκοινωνος* (a sharer, a partner) of it (*το εὐαγγέλιον*)” (1 Cor 9:23).

Paul was “free” *ελευθός*) 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