

20-3-2021

5Th Sunday of Lent

Our life's mission

(Gen 12:1-3, 1 Corinthian 1:21-31, Matt 10:32-42)

Through faith in Christ, Christians are the offspring of Abraham & also heirs to the promises given to Abraham. Today's Old Testament lesson tells us of God's promise given to Abraham. But God called Abraham according to His Eternal purpose to save & bless the world. According to that purpose, God who called Abraham is calling everyone to be saved through the gospel. That is our epistle lesson today. God the Son tells in the gospel lesson how those who are called, should live as disciples in the world.

Triune God is a missionary God. God's mission is to save & bless the world. God is calling us to be a part of this mission. Mission belongs to all of us. Through today's Holy Scriptures God is calling us as His Church to this important mission. That is the central message of today's Holy Scriptures.

The Old Testament lesson: Gen 12:1-3
Our mission: Giving heavenly blessing to others

We see in the first 11 chapters of the Bible, how sin entered a person, spread into family, into society & into the whole universe. Humankind which had God's favor & blessing, lost it through disobedience & brought curse upon itself. When we come to 11th chapter of Genesis , a question arises, "Can human beings be blessed again ? The answer to it is from Gen 12 to Rev 22. It tells how God's merciful plan of salvation toward humankind is revealed & how it will be fulfilled. God told Abraham that He purposed to bless the world through his offspring & that is why He called Abraham. God's mission is the salvation of the world. . Its fulfillment began with the calling of Abraham. Isaac is Abraham's son in flesh, but Isaac is a type of Christ the Lord. His disciples, that is, those who are born in Spirit through faith in Christ the Lord and follow Him , are Abraham's spiritual offspring. God's gracious purpose is to bless the world through them. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & his offspring Israel are God's chosen covenant people. He made them His covenant people, a

peculiar treasure, holy priesthood & a holy nation at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19:5). Why? To show the whole world that He is God. But they failed in the work entrusted to them by God. And so, God chose the Church in Christ to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, as God's special possession (1 Peter 2:9). Why? The same reason He chose Israel i.e. to declare the praises of Him. God tells the same in today's epistle lesson.

Epistle lesson: 1 Cor 1:21-31

We are called in Christ for God's work

Just like the many churches of today, the Corinth church was passing time in quarrels forgetting why God made them His people and the work He gave them to do . Though they forgot, God according to His gracious purpose revealed to the Corinth church through Paul and is telling us the same today. In this lesson God is reminding us of our call, our election, work and Where from the strength for that work comes & is teaching us in what we should boast in this world.

In the 1st chapter of this epistle God who reminded the Corinthian Church is reminding us that we are called to be

His holy people, sanctified in Christ Jesus, to have no quarrels, and be perfectly united in mind and thought, to always be ready to do God's work. Then He is reminding us that He did not call us because of our qualification, wisdom or power. God who made it clear to the Corinthians through Paul is reminding us that only by His rich mercies, His gracious purpose to save the world, God has called us and is asking us to join hands with Him. He tells us to do this work by preaching the gospel only, that is to preach Christ crucified. He also tells us that the world will say we are foolish & that we are stumbling blocks. Yet, He says that His people must preach the cross, His Son crucified on the cross. He reveals today the mystery of Cross that only through the death of His Son Christ on the cross can anyone obtain the wisdom of salvation & be justified, be redeemed from the bondage of sin and be sanctified. God is teaching us only to boast in the cross & in His Son Christ the Lord, like Paul. As we meditate upon the cross in this Lent, let us know why should we boast only in the cross? Because as Dr Stott said in his book "The Cross of Christ", cross is the basis of our righteousness, the essence

of our message and the way to our holiness. God who told His chosen disciples that those who don't learn this important lesson cannot be partakers of His mission, is telling us the same today. That is our gospel lesson today.

Gospel lesson: Matt 10:32-42
We cannot fulfill the mission without daily taking up the cross & following lord Jesus

God did not send His Son the first time into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him (John 3:17). Jesus the Son, will judge the world when He comes the second time. But when He came the first time, He came to save the world. By offering His life as sacrifice on the cross, dying & being resurrected on the third day, He unfolded God's plan of salvation for humankind. To finish the work He began, He chose 12 disciples and named them apostles. To do that work, He was with them for 3 years & trained them. He taught them until they understood about Him, about the fulfillment of His work on earth, which is the redemption of humankind from sin,

about the sufferings He was to face, His death & resurrection.

But in this portion, the Lord taught them the opposition & persecution they would face in doing the work entrusted to them by Him. He is also teaching us the same today. He tells us not to be afraid by any amount of persecution. He encourages us not to step back even if we must lose our life. Our Lord taught , whoever loses their life for His sake, will save it for everlasting life and only those who are ready to pay this price for discipleship are His true disciples. The Lord had to take many classes to teach the disciples, the lesson of the mystery of the cross of Jesus Christ because it is a very hard lesson to understand.

Another very difficult lesson to learn for the disciples who are in God's mission is daily taking up their cross and following Him. He is telling today to learn that lesson well. Paul stands first among the disciples who learnt & taught this lesson. He taught it very clearly in the epistle to Galatians. Taking up the cross daily and following means, daily crucifying the 'self' the 'I' in us (Gal 2:20), daily crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal

5:24), daily crucifying our world which is full of lust of the flesh ,lust of the eye, pride of life (Gal 6:14). When we die daily by crucifying our self we live by the power of resurrection. Only those who live like this will be able to complete God's mission. Like Abraham they become channels of blessings for others. Like Paul, they will imitate the Lord & prepare others for that work. In this way may the Lord help us to fulfill His mission in this world! Amen!

Life Application:

1. Do you know the answer to the question "why am I in this world?" If you still haven't, try to know it today from the Spiritual table 9 in the 40 Spiritual tables I prepared. (Ask for them)
2. Write down your life's mission statement. Here is my life's mission statement.. Pray for me. It is , to proclaim, admonish and teach everyone with all wisdom like Apostle Paul , so that I may present everyone fully mature in Christ and to strenuously contend to this end as His soldier with all the energy of Christ so powerfully works in me (Col 1:28,29).

Our Mission

Mission is global people of Global God reaching out the ends of the Globe.

The Church mission flows from the identity of God & His Christ. If we know who God is, mission is an inescapable responsibility. Paul went a little ahead and quoted Isaiah 49:6, identifying his mission with international ministry saying, “the Lord has commanded us: I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47). Though there is planning & work involved in the mission, in the Biblical language it is basically not our work, not started by us. It is God’s work. It is so amazing that God is inviting us to join hands with Him. Mission was born in God’s heart. It is flowing from His heart to ours.