

## Wednesday, the Fourth Week in Lent

### To Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ through Word and Deed

#### 1. Good News!

In Luke's gospel, the angel Gabriel appears to faithful Zechariah and proclaims the good news: "Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at this birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord." Luke 1:13-15 (NRSV)

Six months later, Gabriel appears to Mary, a cousin to Elizabeth, to proclaim the good news that she had been chosen to be the mother of God's Son. Mary responds, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word." Luke 1:38 (NRSV)

After hearing this news, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth to share the good news. When Elizabeth hears Mary greet her, the child in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy and she proclaims, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" Luke 1:42-43 (NRSV)

Both women were amazed at the gift of pregnancy under extraordinary circumstances. Both women had good news to proclaim to the other.

1. Imagine the conversation these two women had. What might they say to each other?
2. What risks did they face when their good news was made public?

After John was born and named, the Holy Spirit filled Zechariah who proclaimed good news to his son,

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.  
By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1:76-79 (NRSV)

It is unclear how often the cousins John and Jesus saw each other when they were young, but they were bonded together not only by the unusual circumstances of their births, but in the working out of God's will for His people. John fulfilled his role as he proclaimed the Good News to the people, "I baptize you with water; but One Who is more powerful than I is coming. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Luke 3:16 (NRSV)

These four people are examples of proclaimers of God's good news in both word and deed. Each sacrificed much.

1. In regards to proclaiming God's good news through word and deed, who do you relate to— Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary of John the Baptist?
2. What risks come from being a proclaimer of the good news of God?
3. How easy or difficult is it for you to proclaim God's good news in word and deed?

## 2. Proclaim the Good News of God

For most people it is easy to tell good news to family and friends—to talk about a great new restaurant or movie. Words flow. But is that proclaiming? Proclaim sounds kind of preachy. Sounds like you need to be a public speaker.

1. Be honest. When you hear the word “proclaim” what is your first reaction?

The good news of God is indeed GOOD news—the kind of news that casts out fear, gives hope, sheds light, and transforms life. This good news in the New Testament is proclaimed by heavenly angels and those filled with the Spirit. We are also called to share the Good News of Christ with others.

“Everyone who calls, ‘Help, God!’ gets help.” But how can people call for help if they don’t know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven’t heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them?

Romans 10:13-14 (MSG)

1. What is the Good News of God?
2. How does it feel to know that you are called to be God’s messenger of good news on earth?
3. Of all the good news which could be shared about God, what is your favorite?

## 3. In Word and Deed

It is tempting to separate word and deed.

Our words carry weight, have impact, and are meant to be supported by our action. Likewise our deed are to be supported by our words. Word and deed don’t always need to be united, sometimes one is enough. But we are called to be ready to speak or to act in witness to the faith that is in us. .

Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. 1 Peter 3:15 (MSG)

1. What are some of God’s promises (Good News) that you need to hear from others?
2. How does it feel to hear the good news proclaimed to you?
3. What makes it hard for us to put God’s promises into words?
4. How can we help each other to learn how to speak God’s promises to others?

In your baptism, you have been given all you need to be able to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses . . . to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (ESV)

So in with the Holy Spirit given to us in baptism, we go to tell everyone about the love of Jesus in word and deed.

Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.”

John 20:21 (NRSV)

This study was taken in part from

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