“Shout It From The Rooftops!”

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

If you’ve watched any TV in the last few weeks I’m sure there have been a couple of major events that have created some headlines. Some of these events have caused quite a stir, some in a positive sense, some in a negative sense. Last week, Pastor Kassulke mentioned the acquittal of Casey Anthony. Many people have expressed a negative impression of the verdict. This last week has also created some headlines of a different sort. Headlines that get everybody excited. The US Women’s Soccer team has advanced to the World Cup final today (which should be getting started right as church gets out). And if they happen to win, imagine the excitement that would cause.

This type of news, whether good or bad always creates some sort of emotional response, a vocalizing of emotions. On the one hand, some people shout down the verdict of the Casey Anthony trial, while on the other, people are celebrating the US women’s soccer team’s accomplishment. Christians too have something to shout about, Jesus talks about it in our text for this morning, he says what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. While there might be some anxious mothers out there if they found out their children were literally shouting out from their rooftops, the idea of excitement behind sharing this good news comes through with Jesus’ words. The message that Christians have to share is something to shout about, to SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS.

The words of Jesus that I just read were first spoken to the 12 disciples, whom Jesus was just sending off on short mission trips. While there were many people that followed Jesus on a regular basis, Jesus chose these 12 (of which we heard about last week) to specifically carry on the ministry of his church. These were some of the instructions that Jesus was giving them. He knew that the task would be great, in the last chapter of Matthew he spoke the words, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. These instructions would help the disciples in the mission trip Jesus was sending them on.

Jesus told his disciples to go out to the Jewish cities and proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near. The disciples would take nothing for support, just the clothes on their back and the message on their heart. If the town would not accept them, they were just to shake the dust off their sandals and move on to the next place. All this was in preparation for the times when the message that they would SHOUT FROM THE ROOFTOPS would not be accepted, when they would be ridiculed and persecuted for their beliefs.

Jesus told them to expect this, a student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. If we just look at Jesus life, there were countless times when the religious authorities of his day opposed him, it was the religious authorities that tried him unfairly and essentially sentenced him to death. If this is what would happen to the teacher, why should the disciples expect to be treated any differently, why should we be expected to be treated any differently?

And yet, despite the opposition, this was a message that Jesus wanted his disciples to take with them, it’s a message that he wants us to take in. But the message they were to shout from the rooftops would not be the message of the Israeli national team winning the soccer World Cup, but it would be carried with the same passion, even more in fact. It is the same passion that we can share about being a Christian.

So what is this message that arouses this passion in us? It’s the same message that we heard Jeremiah preach in the Old Testament lesson, it’s the same message that Paul preached in our Epistle for this morning. It’s the same message the disciples were told to shout from the roofs. It’s the same message that you hear preached from this pulpit week-in and week-out, no matter the preacher.

It’s the message of Christ crucified, the message found in the Bible. The message of amazing grace that God looked at us sinners and loved us. He chose us as his very own. In order to satisfy our debt of sin, he sent Jesus to take our sin upon himself, and thus forgiving the whole world of their sins. This is the message that we are to SHOUT FROM THE ROOFTOPS.
With a message like this, there should be no stopping it. But we know better than that. We as human beings have this peculiar ability to be able to mess things up. We have the ability to be timid of the bold message that God has given us. We have the ability to completely reject the message that God gives us. It might be funny if it were not so sad. The only message that saves is the one message by nature we can only reject.

Even as Christians, children of God, with a message to proclaim need reminding of this. The disciples did, who are we to think that we are better than they. This tendency for not wanting to proclaim the message is precisely why Jesus told them, **Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.** It isn’t mankind that we need to worry about disappointing, it’s God. For it is God who is **the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

But who of us at one time or another has not felt all that excited about sharing God’s Word. Maybe we try to excuse ourselves by saying, “I don’t know what to say” or “She would’ve just blown me off.” How often might we have just gone along with the crowd, did what they did, spoke like they spoke, just to fit in, all the while none of them realizing that you’re a Christian.

You might come back and say to me, “well Pastor, you’re no different, you do the same things.” I would have to shamefully answer, “yes, I have.” Probably even worse. I can remember numerous times when I have had the opportunity to talk with someone, and I never even led the conversation toward my faith. And every time that happens, when for one reason or another we conveniently dismiss Christ from our words and actions, we are basically saying, “I’m ashamed to have you around Jesus” “You’re a major buzz-kill at a party.” We need only to look to the last words of our verses for today to see the penalty for disowning Christ. **But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.**

Even by our own admissions, we should have no arguments for Christ disowning us before his Father in heaven. But just when we get down about failing to SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS, we remember the message itself and the comfort that it brings. Yes, if it were up to us, we would have screwed up our salvation a long time ago. But it doesn’t depend on us at all, it all depends on Christ. We put our trust and faith in Christ and what he has done. He gives us the reason to SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS. Three times in six verses Jesus tells his disciples **not to be afraid.**

Jesus told the disciples not to be afraid of men, for they are not the ones in control, this life is not the one that matters. It is God who will uncover what is covered, reveal what is concealed. We were not placed here in this life to please men, but rather to glorify God. To give glory and praise to the God who made us, who called us by name into his family. The same God who continues to strengthen you with His Word in church and personal Bible reading, who strengthens you in a miraculous way with his very body and blood in the Lord’s Supper.

It is our God, who watches over every one of us, who knows the number of hairs on your head. This is reason not to be afraid, that we have the God of the universe on our side as we SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS. We reflect Christ with our words and our actions. It is with these words and actions that we confess Christ. And it is with a wonderful promise that Jesus gives us assurance of our salvation, **Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.** What greater encouragement it is to have the very Son of God backing us up.

The message that we SHOUT FROM THE ROOFTOPS is essentially a summary of our Christian life. How we were lost in sin, but were brought to God through faith in what Christ has done for us. It is the story of what God has done that gives us the excitement of being a Christian.

You may not have people literally shouting from the rooftops if the US Women’s team wins the World Cup today, but they certainly will be excited wanting to share the news, wanting to relive the moment of winning. May this same excitement take hold of us about being a Christian, not just today, but every day. Being a bold witness is part of what being a Christian is about. Our Lord has given us every reason to shout out this message from the rooftops. While the excitement from the result of today’s game will die down, the excitement we have as Christians will live on with us through eternity.