

# St. Paul: On The Same page

06.22.14 for Pentecost 2a

## Day One: Jeremiah 20:7-13

*Whenever I speak, I cry out  
proclaiming violence and  
destruction... But if I say, "I will  
not mention him... his word is in  
my heart like a fire..."*

I like seeing our soldiers in uniform because I'm proud of my country and glad for their service. But there is one drawback to wearing uniform clothes. Right away everyone knows something about you, and they may judge what you do in a different way.

When I am wearing a clerical collar, sometimes people treat me differently (maybe better, maybe not). Worse, I sometimes forget that I'm wearing it. And then I realize that the way I act, the things I say, the scowl on my face, or my impatient honking of the horn now reflects on the entire Christian faith, which people associate with my shirt!

What would it be like if you wore a uniform that showed everyone you were a Christian? How might people

react at work or school or in the store? What if it was something you could never take off, like a tattoo, and you could not help but represent Jesus wherever you went?

Jeremiah could not stop telling people the truth. God gave it to him to speak and he had to continue telling them the truth, even though it made people hate him.

Like you, Jeremiah became discouraged. He wished that he could just be silent. But later he said, "the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior." And God blessed Jeremiah's message, not only during his life, but even more after Jeremiah was gone.

How has God called you to speak? How are you marked so that others know you belong to him? Where would you wish that you didn't have to represent him?

How has the Lord been with you even when it's not easy?

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, you have called us to speak your Word too, even if it is not popular. Be with me today like a mighty warrior, and give me courage. Amen.*

## Day Two: Romans 6:12-23

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ... But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations.*

How would your life be different if you had a different boss? (or a different teacher – or different parents) Do you sometimes wish that you could replace that person with someone who was less demanding?

Do you know what it's like to work for someone who can never be pleased, who always finds fault with your work? Even if your boss is kind and gentle, if your boss is super good at your work, it's hard to

be very thrilled about your results, isn't it?

When your teacher can make beautiful sounds with the instrument, and all you can produce are squeaks and squawks. When your friend can understand the problem instantly, but you struggle and struggle. When your boss could do this in a minute, but it will take you all day. All of these things make us feel like a failure, even if our boss is kind.

Paul says, that's what the Law is like. Even though it is God's Law, it still leaves us as a failure. We cannot measure up to the law, and therefore sin becomes our master.

But you are not under the Law. You are under Grace.

And what a wonderful word that is! You are under God's gift. And you have now become a servant of God's righteousness. How does that change your life today?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, there are many people and things that try to run my life, but I know that you are my Lord. I cannot fail today, because you are leading me. Amen.*

### Day Three: Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

*These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans...*

*Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,<sup>22</sup> and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.<sup>23</sup> When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

Along with every new job comes a new job description. Reading what the disciples would experience, how would you feel if this were your job?

Jesus sent out the 12 disciples, and he sent them with warnings about what would happen. They would be rejected, betrayed, persecuted, arrested. Even some of their own family members would stand against them!

Yikes! What job could you take today that might cause such a reaction?! It seems crazy, and yet this is exactly what happened to the

followers of Jesus – and it’s what is still happening today.

If that’s the case, why did the disciples accept the job? Why would anyone else do it now?

Jesus’ disciples obeyed his call for two reasons: because they loved their Savior, and because they trusted him. They knew of his love for them, and that he would not send them out if he did not have a plan for them.

And here he shares just a tiny but important part of his plan. We will go from place to place and seek to share the good news of life in Jesus. But we will not finish it – we will not bring the gospel to all the world before Jesus will come again.

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, you sent your disciples. Will you send me? The need is still great. Many still are lost. Send me out, and go with me to give me words to speak. Amen.*

(Go to [persecution.org](http://persecution.org) to find out more, and click on “take action” to see ways that you can help your brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering persecution.)

## Day Four: Matthew 10:24-26

*“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household? <sup>26</sup> “So have no fear of them*

When was the last time anyone called you a name? That sounds like a grade school thing, doesn't it? Besides the usual names, I was called “Dorf” and “Dwarf” and of course “Dork.” And then there were the variations on my first name. That's very childish, and adults don't generally do that.

Or do they? If you read the news, you'll see many political people speaking politely – but listen more closely to their words and they are often making terrible accusations against each other. They may not call each other “dummy” or “ugly.” But they imply much worse things.

How do you feel when you've been insulted? We say that “sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me.” And yet names do hurt. They attack

our pride, our sense of self-worth, our value.

But Jesus makes it sound different. We are following an amazing master. We are following the Son of God, our Good Shepherd. So we should know that if people have called Jesus names (like Beelzebul, which means Lord of the Flies), then surely they will call us names too.

And yet the names did not change who Jesus was, did they? Names did not make Jesus any less great, and they did not stop him from his great sacrifice for us. And so names cannot harm us either.

We already have a more important name that no one can take away, no matter what they call us. We are Jesus' sheep. We are his bride. We are called Christians, servants of Christ.

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, help me not be afraid of what others might say or think – but only to desire your words of love for me. I am glad that you call me “friend.” Amen.*