

Greetings Redeemer family,

There's a famous quote in Christian circles, popularly attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary, use words." In its simplest form, this quote is a helpful reminder that the Gospel is not just a set of cold, academic facts. Instead, the Gospel is a life-transforming message that can be demonstrated in innumerable acts of love and service. We have seen this already in our studies this Summer, as the Gospel brings forth fruit of Love, Joy, Peace, and Patience in the community of the church. If you take a few moments now, you can probably think of recent ways that Christian brothers and sisters have preached the Gospel to you without saying a thing.

One problem with this quote, however, is the simple fact that we do use words. Try going for 10 minutes without talking, writing, listening to or reading anything. It's impossible (unless, of course, you're asleep!). Even the St. Francis quote itself uses words. I know I use words constantly – and only rarely do I think about the impact my words are having on others. So this week we will take some time to consider our words together as Mike continues or seires on the Fruit of the Spirit with Kindness and Gentleness.

We begin our service with a call to worship from Psalm 19. The opening of the psalm is reminiscent of the St. Francis quote, as creation uses all of its being to point to the glories of God. Seeing this, the psalmist is inspired to use everything in his life to honor God as well.

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Our first song this week is a meditation on the greatness of God. He is so majestic and wonderful that it goes beyond the ability of words to express. Faced with the glory of God, we can only stand amazed.

*From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of Fall to the fragrance of Spring
Ev'ry creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming

Indescribable, uncontainable
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful, untamable
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God*

Our second song is a reminder of the great kindness and love He continues to show to His people. This can be an easy thing to forget. It is right to remember that the love and grace of God is shown most definitively in the work of Christ. Yet it is for the sake of Christ that we are now seen as co-heirs with Him, adopted sons and daughters of the Most High God. As His beloved children, He will withhold no good thing from us, according to His infinite wisdom.

*Praise to the Lord,
Who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness
And mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.*

Having sung of the glory and goodness of God, we will be using the words of the Nicene Creed as our confession of faith this week. These words help us to understand the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one God in three persons. In using this ancient creed, we honor the debt that we owe to our faithful brothers and sisters gone before, who loved God, meditated upon His Word, and wrote these words so that we might know Him better today.

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.*

*And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.*

*And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

As I was planning songs for this week, our Offertory song immediately sprang to mind. A heart and life that has been changed by the grace of Jesus will overflow in praise for what He has done.

*Let the weak say "I am strong"
Let the poor say "I am rich"*

*Let the blind say "I can see
It's what the Lord has done in me"
(repeat)*

*Hosanna hosanna
To the Lamb that was slain
Hosanna hosanna
Jesus died and rose again*

We close our service this week with a song of devotion. Because Jesus has washed us clean from sin, credited us with His righteousness, and empowered us by His Spirit, we are free to live rejoicing in who He is. With nothing to prove and nothing to fear, we can love without conditions. With our words, we can build up and encourage one another, celebrating the work of the Spirit in the lives of others. This is the joy of living in Christian community, with Christ our joyful king.

*Let us love and sing and wonder
Let us praise the Savior's name
He has hushed the law's loud thunder
He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame
He has washed us with His blood
He has washed us with His blood
He has washed us with His blood
He has brought us nigh to God*

*Let us praise and join the chorus
Of the saints enthroned on high
Here they trusted Him before us
Now their praises fill the sky
"Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
Thou art worthy Lamb of God"*

Using words,

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