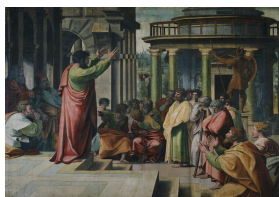




The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?
Part XII: Evangelization



St Paul Preaching in Athens
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Sister Sara Draney is a Dominican Nun from the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas. Helen is a lay-Dominican and has a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I should mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, my job is to ask questions. To answer those questions is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

Last time, as we discussed experiencing the fullness of faith, I mentioned that as a convert to the Catholic faith, I spent the longest time nibbling at the edges. It is difficult to explain my journey, with all of its twists, turns, and set backs. Even as I took steps towards becoming Catholic, there was also a great resistance within me. As I look back at my journey, there was so much within the world to take me away from the faith. One might wonder, how is it that I continued on the

Catholic journey, especially with all the pressures of the world and political correctness? The answer is the patience, love, and nudgings of God.

The journey of faith is not so we can pick and choose the pieces we like and disregard the rest, it is so we can experience a full relationship with our Creator and His creation. The relationship to which God calls us is a relationship of love.

Will we fail at times and make mistakes along the way? The answer for each of us is, “Yes.” The blessing is that God does not want to lose any of the children of His creation, therefore, He waits with patience for us to come to Him with a loving and contrite heart.

There are times I have made the case that our faith is as simple as the two greatest of commandments; to love God and to love one another. Jesus told us that all prophecy and the law depend upon these two. (cf. Matthew 22:36-40). That means the fullness of faith depends on these two as well. It is that simple, but learning how to live those commandments and how to share the blessings of our love for God and one another, that is a life long journey of living and learning. Let us, then, go forth and learn how to live the blessings which God has always desired for us; the blessings of love.

In this final part of our series concerning what God asks of us, we're going to discuss the call to evangelization. If we think about it, if we truly believe in the blessings we may receive through experiencing the fullness of faith, why would we hide this treasure? Some would say it is to avoid persecution or to obtain acceptance within a politically charged society and to avoid the condemnation of the political correctness police. Indeed, there are those who live in regions where expression of Christian faith has met with responses of violence, death, and even attempts at Christian genocide.

Before we get into these concerns, though, let us first examine what evangelization is.

Our friends Merriam-Webster define evangelization as:

- 1: to preach the gospel to
- 2: to convert to Christianity

(Question 1: When we examine this definition of evangelization, we see the words “preach” and “convert.” What type of people stereotypically come to mind when we mention preaching and converting? What qualifies them to speak on behalf of God?)

- Angels
- Prophets
- Clergy
- Religious
- Preachers

(Genesis 19:1-3)

1 *The two angels* reached Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he got up to greet them; and bowing down with his face to the ground, 2 he said, “Please, my lords, come aside into your servant’s house for the night, and bathe your feet; you can get up early to continue your journey.” But they replied, “No, we will pass the night in the town square.” 3 *He urged them so strongly, however, that they turned aside to his place and entered his house.* He prepared a banquet for them, baking unleavened bread, and they dined.

(Genesis 19:12-15)

12 Then the guests said to Lot: “Who else belongs to you here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, all who belong to you in the city—*take them away from this place!* 13 *We are about to destroy this place, for the outcry reaching the LORD against those here is so great that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.*” 14 So *Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had contracted marriage with his daughters.* “Come on, leave this place,” he told them; “the LORD is about to destroy the city.” *But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.* 15 As dawn was breaking, *the angels urged Lot on, saying, “Come on! Take your wife with you and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.”*

(Question 2: As we reflect upon this scripture, we observe angels of the Lord sent to Lot. What do we see them doing here and what purpose do they serve? How does Lot react as well as his son-in-laws?)

(Jonah 3:1-10)

1 *The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time;* 2 *Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you.* 3 So Jonah set out for Nineveh, in accord with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an awesomely great city; it took three days to walk through it. 4 Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day’s walk announcing, “*Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown,*” 5 *the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.*

6 *When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.* 7 Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh: “*By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water.* 8 *Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands.* 9 *Who knows? God may again repent and turn from his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish.*” 10 *When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.*

(Question 3: As we reflect upon this scripture, we observe the Lord instructing the prophet Jonah to speak to the city of Nineveh. What was the nature of the message? How did the people of the city react? What was the role of Jonah?)

(Isaiah 40:1-3)

*Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.*

*2 Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service [servitude] has ended,
that her guilt is expiated,*

*That she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins.*

3 A voice proclaims:

In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD!

Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!

(Matthew 3:1-3)

1 In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea 2[and] saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

*"A voice of one crying out in the desert,
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.'"*

(Question 4: Here, we see a thread which flows from the Old Testament to the New. It is the connection of one prophet speaking of a time, but then, he also points to another. **What do we see as we compare these two segments from the Old and the New?)**

(Mark 3:14)

14 He appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach...

(Mark 6:12)

12 So they [the twelve] went off and preached repentance.

(Mark 16:19-20)

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. 20 But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.]

(Matthew 28:18-20)

18 Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

(Question 5: Here, we see Jesus appoint disciples with a mission. What was this mission? To whom was this mission directed? What is the difference between these disciples and the prophets and angels?)

(2 Timothy 2:1-7)

1 So you, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well. 3 Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 To satisfy the one who recruited him, a soldier does not become entangled in the business affairs of life. 5 Similarly, an athlete cannot receive the winner's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer ought to have the first share of the crop. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

(2 Timothy 4:1-5)

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: 2 proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. 3 For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers 4 and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. 5 But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.

(Question 6: Here, we see Saint Paul charge Saint Timothy with a mission. What is this mission? How might we compare and contrast this with the angels, prophets, and disciples?)

(Deuteronomy 11:1-7)

1 Love the LORD, your God, therefore, and keep his charge, statutes, ordinances, and commandments always. 2 Recall today that it was not your children, who have neither known nor seen the discipline of the LORD, your God—his greatness, his strong hand and outstretched arm; 3 the signs and deeds he wrought in the midst of Egypt, on Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and on all his land; 4 what he did to the Egyptian army and to their horses and chariots, engulfing them in the waters of the Red Sea[a] as they pursued you, so that the LORD destroyed them even to this day; 5 what he did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place; 6 and what he did to the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up out of the midst of Israel, with their families and tents and every living thing that belonged to them— 7 but it was you who saw with your own eyes all these great deeds that the LORD has done.

(Deuteronomy 11:18-20)

18 Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul. Bind them on your arm as a sign, and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. 19 Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up, 20 and write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates,...

(Question 7: Here, I took a trip back to the Old Testament where Moses was giving instructions. To whom were these instructions given? What were they called to teach? To whom were they instructed to teach? What was the reason they were instructed to teach?)

(Matthew 10:32-33)

32 Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. 33 But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.

(Question 8: Here, we are told that whoever denies Jesus before others, Jesus will deny them before our Heavenly Father. In what ways do we acknowledge Jesus before others? In what ways do we deny Him?)

(Question 9: As we consider the scripture we discussed today, all who believe in His Word are called to share His Word. What concerns might we have as to our ability to evangelize? How might we evangelize if we feel we do not have the gift of proclaiming, preaching, or teaching?)

(Matthew 5:14-16)

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. 16 Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

(Matthew 10:19-20)

19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. 20 For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

(1 Peter 3:15-16)

15 Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 16 but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.

Quotes:

– Bishop Robert Barron

The minute you walk outside of your church on Sunday you're in mission territory.

– Peter Kreeft

The world was won for Christ not by arguments but by sanctity: “What you are speaks so loud, I can hardly hear what you say.”

– Father Mike Schmitz

You are a billboard for Christ.

– *Saint Teresa of Ávila*

We must all try to be preachers through our deeds.

Final Thoughts:

During Easter vigil, it is the tradition for parishioners to light a candle from the Pascal Candle, which represents the Light of Christ. We should note, though, that while each of the smaller candles held by those present may be lit directly from the Pascal Candle, the majority of the candles are lit from the candle of one whose candle has already received the fire of the Pascal candle. As this light spreads from one candle to another, we see a room of darkness suddenly brightened. This is an example of how the Word of God may spread from heart to heart and how evangelization may spread light to the world.

As we discussed, God has spoken to us in many and varied ways, but, if we allow, He also speaks through us. Some are gifted with the abilities of public speaking while others are quite intimidated by the thought. We must remember, though, we are all gifted with the opportunity to preach by what we do and how we live. Through both conversation and deed, we have the ability to spread the light of the gospel.

Evangelization of the gospel is not always done at the pulpit, for if it were, many would never hear or see the Word. If we think about it, most are brought to the pulpit as the result of a conversation or invitation which occurs well away from that space.

Through our interactions with others, we leave seeds of our beliefs and values. Such seeds are sown by what we say, but more importantly, by what we do. We do not always know if such seeds shall bear fruit, but one thing we do know is that if we do not sow, there can be no fruit.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin a new series which will discuss the culture of life.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Culture of Life – Part I: Sanctity of Life

References:

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