

Sunday, February 2, 2025 – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

4-5 - The word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Psalm 139: 13 – It was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Genesis 12: 2-3 – I will bless you so that you will be a blessing. In you all families of the earth shall be blessed.

Isaiah 42: 6 – I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations.

6-8 - Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

Exodus 4: 13 – Moses - O my Lord, please send someone else.

Isaiah 6: 8 – Here am I; send me!

Are you more apt to say, "O Lord, send me," or "O Lord, send someone else"?

9-10 - Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

When and how has God equipped, strengthened, and encouraged you?

Psalm: Psalm 71:1-6

3 - Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; you are my crag and my stronghold.

1 Samuel 24: 22 – Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

6 - I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 - If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Comment from Richard Wurmbrand.

2 - And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Matthew 17: 20 – If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain

3 - If I give away all my possessions, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Matthew 19: 22 – When the young man heard this, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

4-6 - Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

But the Christians in Corinth were boasting about their spiritual lineage and giftedness (ch. 1, 3, 12, 14), commending themselves for their openness to sinful behavior (ch. 5), dragging each other into court (ch. 6), looking down on those who were troubled by things that did not trouble them (ch. 8), and not considering those who would be coming to the agape feasts later than they (ch. 11).

How would you evaluate your love in comparison to Paul's standard?

8 - Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

Cessationism – the belief that certain spiritual "sign gifts" ceased to be given with the death of the apostles.

12 - For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

What do you see only dimly? What do you know only in part?

13 - And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Colossians 1: 3-5 – We have heard of your faith in Jesus Christ and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 1: 2-3 – We always give thanks to God for all of you, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope.

How strong is your faith? How strong is your hope? How strong is your love?

What could help you grow in those three areas?

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

21-22 – "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

23-24 - You will say, "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum." Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown.

25-27 - The truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.

28-30 - When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

When has someone said something that filled you with rage? What did you do about it?