

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
July, 2020  
Isaiah 55:10-11

Things can become very frustrating for those who serve the Lord in a congregation. A pastor writes a sermon that less than half the congregation will hear. A congregation tries to recruit men to serve on the Church Council and discovers that the people interested are those who have served on the Council before. A Sunday School teacher prepares faithfully for her Sunday morning class and discovers that no children have come that morning.

These experiences are discouraging. They make a person wonder if all the time and effort are worth it.

But today God has good news for the pastor, the Sunday School teacher, and the members of this congregation. He has news for everyone who feels discouraged by the apparent futility of their efforts. When God's Word is proclaimed, it accomplishes God's purpose in that time, place, and situation, even though it may not seem that way to us. God tells us that His Word works and that we should not be discouraged.

Let's look at why the Word works, how the Word works, and for what purpose the Word works.

**Why does the Word work?** It works because it is God's Word. Any message that is shared is only as reliable as its source. Since it is God's Word that we proclaim, and since God stands behind His Word, this

Word, this message is true!

When God's Word speaks, we cannot silence it or compromise it; where God's Word is silent, we must remember that our opinions are only opinions, no better or worse than anyone else's.

When we share God's Word, we can do so with confidence, knowing that we can speak as though we are God Himself, since the Word that we share is His Word, not ours.

**How does the Word work?** The Holy Spirit works in and through the Word whenever and wherever the Word is used. The Holy Spirit is present, working God's will whenever any of us share God's Word in any way. If the hearers reject the Good News of the love of Christ that the Word offers them, it's not because the Holy Spirit isn't working through the Word; it's because the people are resisting the Spirit as He is working. We can't blame the Holy Spirit or the Word for the stubbornness of human beings.

The Spirit teaches people about sin and points out the Good News of what Jesus did for them. The Holy Spirit is calling them to faith. But the Spirit does not force anyone to believe! Our job is to preach and teach God's Word. It is not our job to convert people to believe. That's the Holy Spirit's work.

However, the Word works only if it is proclaimed. The Word of God printed on the pages of a book between two covers that remain closed is not able to work faith in anyone at anytime. That is why Jesus commissioned you and me and all His people, to

spread the Word that has changed us from sinner to saint. If we don't share the Word with others, we can't complain that God's Word does not work as it claims to do.

The Word works, but like any tool, it must be used.

**For what purpose does the Word work?** The purpose of the Holy Scriptures was clearly stated by St. Paul when he wrote to Timothy, ...from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. The Word works to bring condemned sinners to faith in their Savior, Jesus.

The Scriptures are also used as a weapon to be used against the attacks of Satan who calls our salvation into question with doubts and false doctrines.

When you get right down to it, our assurance that the Word works lies in the promise of God Himself. And God always keeps His promises. His promise in Isaiah 55:10-11 is that the proclamation and sharing of His Word is never in vain. It is never worthless or without purpose. Whenever, wherever, and to whomever the Word of God is proclaimed, the will of God is being carried out!

What comfort and encouragement it gives us to realize that God is working with us as we teach God's Word! We can't go wrong if we share the Word, because sharing the Word is doing the will of the Lord who gave it to us!

Through Isaiah, the Holy Spirit, clearly and simply tells us how the Word works: God's Word comes like the rain and snow from heaven. When rain and snow come down, they water the ground and make it bud and flourish.

God's Word comes to sinners to teach, rebuke, correct, and train people in the will of God. God's Word is the means He has promised to use. His Word will continue to help us grow spiritually. But if people don't want His Word, God will send it to another place to people who do want it!

Sharing the Word of God is not always easy. But it is always worth it!

1. It's worth it because there is power in that Word because the Holy Spirit is working through it.
2. It's worth it because the Holy Spirit works with us as we share the Word.
3. It's worth it because there is nothing more important than God's Word because it tells us of the love and forgiveness God offers to us in Jesus.
4. It's worth it because God promises that He will accomplish His will through the Word.

May the Lord bless your hearing of His Word, using it to accomplish those things for which He gave it. May you be strengthened by the Word as you go out into our world armed to use the Word.

Amen            978