

LUKE 4: 38-44

PURPOSE

In our gospel today Jesus tells the crowd, "To the other towns, also, I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God". And from our reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, " you have already heard through the word of truth, the gospel, that has come to you."

What is the good news of the Kingdom of God? What is the word of truth, the gospel, that Paul is talking about? Why couldn't the Corinthians, and many today, understand? Did they not have the big picture? Did they not know who God was? Did they have the wrong image of God?

An expression we've heard before to describe ones inability to see the big picture is that, "one can't see the forest for the trees". Pressures from our lives, our responsibilities, our careers, our families, our wants and

needs, our stuff, prevent us from seeing the big picture, seeing what is really important, seeing the truth.

Telling the good news of the kingdom of God was the purpose of Jesus' life. As Jesus says in our gospel, "Because for this purpose I have been sent".

Understanding Jesus' message we form an image of God, Who He is? What he expects of us? Why we are here? From this big picture, the good news of the kingdom of God, we gain perspective, context for everything. Many today have either lost or never had the big picture. Many today like the Corinthians can't be spoken to as spiritual people, because they have never formed an accurate image of God. For some the big picture has gotten lost in the pressures of everyday life.

What is the good news of the kingdom of God, the word of truth, the gospel, that we are talking about? We can read the bible, old and new testament, and

understand that it is the story of God's relationship to mankind, but is that the good news of the kingdom of God that Jesus is talking about? Yes, but only when we gain from it the image of God that Jesus came to tell us about. The good news of the Kingdom of God is that God created you and I so that he could love us. He is our loving Father.

We must ask ourselves what is our image of God? Is He keeping score? Is He an old white guy with a beard and a staff, does He demand that we be perfect? Who is He? Why are we here? The truthful answer to these the most important questions of our lives, is that we were created to be loved by God. That is what Jesus came to reveal to mankind about our Father.

If our image of God is that he is a demanding, critical, analytical judge, we will never measure up. But that is not who God is. Jesus says in John chapter 14,

“whoever has seen me has seen the Father”. We know from scripture that Jesus was humble, kind, gentle, and loving. He served everyone. Jesus is the image of God that we should have. How many people in our lives have not seriously pursued their faith because they had the wrong image of God?

If we truly know ourselves, we know that we are sinners, and that our sins are all connected in some way to our selfishness, our self-centeredness. We struggle with ourselves, why do we do what we don't want to do? It is not possible for us to refrain from sin on our own. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and His guidance for us is to stop worrying about ourselves, our sins and simply focus on loving and caring for God and others. With our pursuit of goodness, our sins will be replaced by goodness. With His help we will become a kinder, gentler, and more caring person.

Our responsibility as Catholics, as Christians, is to spread the good news. That good news is simply that we are loved by God beyond our wildest imaginings. It is from this big picture, this truth, this perspective, this context, and only this good news that we are to approach life, and can find the answer to the question of our life, "Why are we here?" So, why are we here? We are here to be loved by God, and because of His love for us, we try our very best to become His love in our world.