

I Ran Out of Me

August 25, 2024

Romans 10:9-17

I want to share a story that happened about 50 years ago. A young man had grown up singing ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’, in a family which identified itself as Christian. He was a Vietnam veteran who returned home physically unscathed and lived at the end of a road with his wife and two young daughters. Their nearest neighbor was some miles down the road. That morning he would help his oldest daughter on to the bus for her first day of school. She was excited about going to school.

The road ended at their house so the bus turned around in their front yard. He kissed his daughter goodbye and helped her onto the bus.

As the bus pulled away his daughter ran back to the bench seat at the back of the bus and waved to him. Standing there, he waved to her until the bus was out of sight.

At that moment the young man was overcome with the realization he could never be everywhere with his daughter. He would not be there to warn her. He would not be there to comfort her. He could not protect her from disease or accident. He couldn't control events or people she would come into contact with. He would not always be with her to answer questions about what she was hearing. He felt alone, afraid and helpless.

I had run out of me. I could not be everywhere all the time. I did not have enough muscle, spiritual or political power. I could not know everything and how it relates to the past or the present or how the present relates to the future. Some of us are in that place right now.

I now know the scripture that applied to me then, and applies to all of us this morning. It applies to all people who, this morning, have run out of themselves. Where will they turn?

They are crying out “Hear my cry O Lord. My heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than me.” That day, years ago, I did not know my heart was crying out. But God did. And today God hears every man, woman and child who, when their heart is faint, calls out from the ends of the earth to be led to the Rock that is higher. (Psalms 61:2)

It was not well with my soul. God brought a man into my life who shared the awesome goodness of God. He told me about God's grace, mercy and love and about Jesus. He shared that without

faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists AND that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

I needed a message of hope, not condemnation. (John 3:17)

This summer the news, the podcasts, Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, volcanoes and earthquakes, TV evangelists, end-time prophets, the weather reports, the violence and gun deaths, the politics, the anger, the lies and half truths just overcame me and I flashed back to that event years ago when I felt alone, inadequate and frightened and God reminded me how He had poured out His grace, saved me from the muck and put me on the Rock. (Psalm 27:5 and 1 Corinthians 10:4)

Again, I needed a message of hope. What I thought would be was all upside down again and I felt alone with no power over events that affect those I love.

God reminded me of that time 50 years ago when he sent a man to share good news with me. God made me aware that now it is my turn to be that man for today's hurting person.

God reminded me he did not send Jesus into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him; the risen Lord.

Life is not fair. God is fair because what he says will never change. Jesus cares. He will never leave us nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5 and John 14:18)

We have talked before about how powerful fear, hurt and frustration can be. Anger, the strongest emotion is more powerful than these three and we are seeing people express such horrible anger today. Is it to cover their fear of what is happening, their frustration that what they expected is no longer in reach or is it because what they trusted has let them down. They are hurting.

Without hope they turn to anger.

We know Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

What are we to do? We could become angry to overcome the fear, frustration or hurt we feel. Is it time to cry out? Psalm 46:10 tells us "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." We are to be still instead of angry.

God is everywhere all the time, all powerful and knows everything past, present and future.

This morning we are talking about what we are called to do. We are not called to be prophets or judges. We are to be witnesses. (Acts 1:8) Witnesses of what? of God's mercy and grace which

brings peace within us. We are witnesses of God who cherishes everyone and promises grace and mercy bringing peace to those who are hurting.

We are witnesses to eternity and a present peace. What good news we bring: “Believe: and you and your household will be saved.” (Acts 11:14)

We are not to worship in show but worship in spirit and in truth and see how the Holy Spirit prepares us. More walk- less talk. We are to the world the body of Christ. Life is not a dress rehearsal so we must be ready to answer those who ask us about the hope within us.

(1 Peter 2:15)

We are not to be mismatched with unbelievers but always be ready to share Jesus with them.

(2 Corinthians 6:14)

Remember there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1) We can share that God’s mercy is new every morning. (Lamentations 3:23)

We are to be witnesses not prophets. (Acts 1:8) We can be the witness that brings good news.

No one can refute your testimony. What has being a Christian meant in your life? Freely you have received, freely give. (Matthew)10:8

Everyone who is crying out should see our witness whether they are male or female, free or slave, Sadducee or Pharisee, Roman or Greek, Democrat or Republican, Gentile or Jew because we call ourselves Christians. (Galatians 3:28)

If we are saved we are a new creation indwelt by the Holy Spirit; God himself, in us. We are not called to be judges. We are called to be light: called to be the voice of Jesus: a voice of grace and mercy. (Romans 8:11)

Jesus said his peace he gives us is not the world's peace. And we get to be his voice and share that good news. (John 14:27)

So don’t quench the Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Let the Holy Spirit remind you of the gift you have to share (your testimony, your peace).

Jesus has overcome the world. (John 16:33) Are we His or the world’s (where we run out of us).

We are the witness, an example of the inner peace that God's mercy and grace can bring. We are witnesses of faith: the assurance of things hoped for and conviction about things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1).

We have a message of hope, mercy, grace. A message of peace. Jesus is not hate or judgment but love because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

And God does not want us to fail. If we choose to be God's witness, an instrument of grace, not an agent of the enemy, we have the promise that our success will not be by our power or might but by God's Spirit. (Zachariah 4:6)

We have a choice. Will we be an instrument of God's grace or an agent of God's enemy in every word we speak, every thought, every act? We get to choose which we will be (it is hard to believe that God leaves this choice up to us).

Bring every thought into captivity, compare every act and every word we speak to "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report." (Philippians 4:18)

We have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. Are we ready to witness to this? Can we share it? (1 Peter 2:4)

We all grew up hearing 'I must see it to believe it'. But faith is believing and then we see. Those crying out can only see hopelessness. We are witnesses of faith: witnesses of a peace beyond understanding.

We are not called to judge or condemn or point out how to live. The world is already condemned. We are called to live as witnesses of God's greatness, holiness, mercy, justice and grace. (John 3:17)

This is not about telling others how to live. God will do that. We are to live so others see us as a people of mercy and justice walking humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)

So, where are we this morning? If you don't have peace, are you drifting away from God?

Believe it to see it. Embrace God's will. Obey God's call. Receive God's Power. Reflect God's Power.

Isaiah wrote that we should give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name: make known his deeds among the nations and proclaim that his name is exalted.

(Isaiah 12:4)

You believe that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead then you are saved. You are a child of God. How will those who are hurting believe unless they hear? How will they hear unless someone tells them? Who will tell them? (Romans 10:9-17)

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

No one comes to the Father through laws or works, but through Jesus.

Are we instruments of grace, God's love? Will they call on you? Do you have a message that there is a Way, they can know the Truth and they can have Life?

We remember Jesus will never leave us and we can share that promise with others. (Hebrews 13:5)

Are we the witness, the instrument of grace that God will use?

Do you project hope? If not, why not? God does not want us to fail. Remember how God has acted in your life. That is what you are called to share. God knows your testimony when he brings the person who has run out of self together with you.

Hide God's word in your heart so that you are ready to show yourself approved to those who ask about the hope in you. (Psalm 119:11 and 1 Peter 3:15)

Do those who are crying out know us by our love? (1 Corinthians 13:1)

We are responsible for our words and deeds. Do our words and deeds bless others we meet? Again, we must learn to test our every thought, word and act against Phillipians 4:8: is it true, is it honorable, is it pure, is it pleasing, is it commendable, is there any excellence, is there anything worthy of praise"

We can be God's instrument of grace because for God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)

In the 27th verse of Colossians, Chapter 1, we find an amazing statement: “Christ in you the hope of glory.” Our hope of glory and the hope of glory for those to whom we bring the good news.

The world will leave us but the good news is Jesus will never leave us nor those we share with.

We are people of good news. Others need to hear God loves them and to know about Jesus. God called us out of darkness and we can help others to see this .

In Psalm 73, verses 23-24, there are four promises from God: God is continually with us. God holds our right hand. God guides us with his counsel, and afterwards God will receive us with honor.

In Jesus we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28) Anywhere, anytime, we are children of God and we should act like it. Remember who we are in Christ. Who we are to be to others.

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit then we should act like it, talk like it and think like it.

In times like we find ourselves today Jesus is always there when we run out of ourselves. His presence in our lives is so we can share God’s peace and God’s light with others when they have run out of themselves.

As we are confronted by all that goes on around us, remember to “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Be an instrument of grace. Bring hope to the hopeless. This is what we are called to do. We are witnesses of the living God and our savior Jesus the Christ.

We need to be reminded of who we are: children of God. We are to walk as children of light. We are witnesses to help others when they run out of themselves and only see darkness. We can bring light.

PRAYER: O Lord hear our prayer when we call out to you. Put us on the Rock that is higher than us. As we are your witnesses, strengthen us by your Holy Spirit. Let the love of Christ flow through us. We pray in Jesus' name.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 150:6)