

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Des Moines, WA  
October 13, 2013**

***“Christ’s Love, Our Calling”  
Year 4: Love Speaks***

**2 Timothy 4:1-8**

**Love Speaks Urgently**

- 1. A Deadline Society**
- 2. Focus on our Mission to Speak**
- 3. We have an urgent message!**

**Hymns: 255 – 577 – 578**

**Closing: *Glorify Thy Name***

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.* 2 Timothy 4:1-8

We live in a deadline society, where almost everything is ruled by the clock and subject to the calendar. Consider for a moment how much of your life is ruled by deadlines. It started in school. When you received your first assignment, the deadlines began. And those deadlines just continue coming as we go through life. Most likely, you have deadlines that need to be met at work. I know that you all receive way too many bills, each one having a due

date at the top. Even the food that we eat comes with a “best by” date. Deadlines are everywhere.

What do those deadlines do? First of all, they create urgency, i.e., your teacher, your boss, the electric company, they all give deadlines to stir up in you a sense of urgency. This is something that you should be thinking about. This is something that you need to get done. This is something that can’t be put off.

And because of that, deadlines have a way of ordering our priorities in life. What is most important in life? Let me check what is next on my calendar. Let me see which deadline is coming quickest. That will take priority

Because deadlines can often influence our priorities, what can happen? Those things in our lives without those hard and fast deadlines can sometimes suffer in spite of their importance. Your marriage, your family, your faith; how often don’t they get neglected as we focus on the things that “need” to get done by the deadline?

While we could spend our time today talking about the urgency that needs to give to your marriage or your family or your faith, I’m going to talk about the same thing that we’ve been talking about the last five Sundays – and that is speaking about your Savior.

In his second letter to Pastor Timothy, Pastor Paul gives a recap of what Pastor Schewe and I have been saying to you. Paul says very directly, **“Preach the Word.”** Take the glorious message that God has graciously given to you and speak it to others and speak it all the time. **“In season and out of season,”** Paul says. There might be times when the opportunity to speak seems ripe for the taking, when the moment makes it easy. But there will also be times when it seems that we will face certain rejection. Our job is not to decipher when the Word will be accepted, rather it is to preach, in season and out of season.

We are to use that Word to tell people what they need to hear, as we correct and rebuke people stuck in their sins, while also giving encouragement with the healing that Jesus brings into lives. We are also to give consideration to how we speak, doing so **“with great patience and careful instruction.”** Every one of us has a responsibility to preach the Truth of the Word of God, whether it is natural or difficult, whether it is popular or hated, whether it is convenient or burdensome. That is the message that we’ve been speaking to you: Preach the Word.

Perhaps, this sermon series has had an effect. Perhaps, you’ve been nodding your head for the last

five Sundays, saying, "You're right, Pastor." "I will Pastor." "This is important, Pastor." Maybe you even spend your time in God's house thinking about someone that you know that you could speak to.

But what happens? You will go back to work tomorrow and those deadlines from the boss will again demand your attention. You will look at the calendar and see how full it already is. And the reality is that this important mission that we have received from Jesus will get pushed to the side once again. And we'll again offer the excuses, "I'll have another chance," or "I'll bring it up the next time." "Right now, I have other responsibilities, and those deadlines tell me that they are more important." "I've got time," you reason.

Paul knew that you would do that. So today, he isn't just given you a directive; he's also giving a deadline. In fact, sandwiched around his charge to preach the Word, Paul reminds us that there are two looming deadlines when it comes to our mission to speak of Christ's love.

In verse 6, Paul says this, "**For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.**" When Paul wrote these words to Timothy, he was imprisoned in Rome. Though he had been a prisoner there once before and had been given his freedom, he knew this time that would not happen. This time things were different. Instead of living in a rented home under house arrest, this time he was held in a dark prison cell. Instead of being able to go out into the city, this time he was in chains. Instead of being able to welcome friends and visitors, this time they did not even know where he was. For Paul, there was a deadline. He knew that he was in his final days. Death was coming. The time that Paul had to speak was coming to an end.

Paul connected this comment about his upcoming death with his charge to preach the Word for a very specific reason. To Timothy, to us, Paul was bringing this message: "Consider your life. You are not guaranteed 80 years upon this earth. You are not guaranteed tomorrow upon this earth. More importantly, that person that doesn't know about Jesus and his saving work has no guarantee on the length of his life." The deadlines that we face in sharing our Savior are very real. Death is coming.

Closely connected with that deadline of death is the deadline that Paul mentions in verse 1. There he says, "**In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom.**" If death were just an end to this life, there would be no urgency.

But we know that the end of life on this earth brings the day of judgment for each and every soul. That is a real deadline.

For those who don't know the saving news that Jesus died for their sins, that deadline looms dangerously. Because, if the deadline comes and they have not been reached, the results are disastrous. The results are an eternity in hell, separated from God.

Consider what is at stake here: Every time you and I pass up an opportunity to speak about Jesus' love, the reality is that we are putting someone's eternal well-being at stake, and while we say to ourselves that there is plenty of time and there will be other opportunities, that is simply not always the truth.

Thinking about those deadlines that Paul has given to us could add a lot of pressure and stress to that call that we hear so often to go and preach. It could fill us with a lot of guilt as we think about all of the opportunities we have passed up, and the eternal results our reluctance could have.

But there is something that takes that stress and pressure of those impending deadlines away; there is something that removes the guilt of missed opportunities. It is why we see no fear or desperation in Paul, even as his deadline quickly approached. Paul knew that he personally was ready and prepared. Paul knew that he was forgiven for all that he had failed to do. Through the work that Jesus Christ had done personally for him through his sacrifice on the cross, Paul knew that when the end of his earthly life came, he had an eternal crown of victory waiting for him. As Paul carried out his duty to preach the Word, he was not tallying up a list of accomplishments, or digging a hole with his many failures that would impact his eternal welfare. His reward had already been won by his Savior.

And though Paul had been given this tremendous task of sharing the Gospel with people who desperately needed to hear it or else, Paul also did not feel pressure there because he knew that ultimately God was in control. It is God who brings people to faith and he has promised that not one of his children whom he has called, elected, and saved will miss out on heaven.

Though he did not need to feel stress or pressure, he still felt urgency. He wanted to get the work done that God had graciously given to him.

As we consider the deadlines in front of us, let us take comfort in what Paul knew. You are ready and prepared. You are forgiven for your failures and reluctance and passed opportunities. Jesus Christ

died for your sins, and he is waiting to give you the crown of life when your time on this earth is over. His work is your personal assurance.

While you have been given the very urgent task of taking the Gospel to people who are up against a deadline, you can take comfort in the knowledge that God is the one who calls and gathers and enlightens people from the darkness of unbelief and sin to the light of the Gospel, but don't let that comfort take away your urgency.

Because the call is there: to reach out to those we know with the message of Jesus' love. Put it on the calendar. Make it a priority each and every day. Preach the Word. Speak of Jesus' love. Deliver the calming word of peace to those facing the pressure of a deadline.

Amen