

## **The One who Comes in the Name of the Lord**

Luke 13:31-35

The Second Sunday in Lent, February 21, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

If our house is left to us forsaken until we say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," then who is the one who comes in the name of the Lord so that we may bless Him?

I suppose it goes without saying for some of you, but for others of you it is worth saying. The One who comes in the name of the Lord ultimately is Jesus. He comes in the name of the Lord because He comes in the Name of God His Father. Since He comes in the Name of the Father, He comes in the name of the Lord. The Father is the Lord and so Jesus comes in His name and therefore Jesus comes in the name of the Lord.

We know that Jesus comes in the name of the Father because Jesus completes His work on the third day. Many people can come claiming to come in the name of the Lord. They want your money. They want your adoration. They want your praise and admiration. They want influence in the world. Lots of people come in the name of the Lord. What makes Jesus so special? Jesus completes His work on the third day. And it is not just that He completes His exorcisms on the third day or that He completes His healings on the third day, He completes salvation on the third day. On the third day He rises from the dead. When Jesus rises from the dead every demon is cast out and every disease is healed. They might be cast out and healed in a preliminary way, but cast out and healed they are.

Jesus completes His work on the third day. God the Father raises Him from the dead. When God the Father raises Him from the dead, God the Father endorses Jesus as His Son. God the Father endorses everything that Jesus said and did. God the Father confirms that everything that Jesus did, He did in the Name of the Father. And so God the Father sent Jesus to us. Jesus came in the name of the Lord. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. When we say that Jesus gathers us to Himself like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But if we do not say that then our house is left to us forsaken because in spite of the fact that Jesus wanted to gather us to Himself, we were not willing.

Now Jesus is not the only one who comes in the name of the Lord. There are others who come in the name of the Lord. Jesus is the most important one, but He is not the only one.

Jesus Himself is also Lord. The Father is Lord and the Son is Lord. Because the Son is Lord, like the Father, He sends out people in His name. He sends the apostles. He tells them, "As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you." Therefore the apostles come in the name of the Lord. After the Lord ascended into heaven the apostles began to preach in Judea, and then Samaria, and finally unto the ends of the earth. Geographically speaking by the time the apostles had died, they had brought the Gospel from Spain to India, if church tradition is to be believed and there is no reason to doubt it.

When the apostles came they cast out demons. They healed the sick. They forgave sins. They raised the dead. They preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If a town did not receive them, then that town rejected the Gospel of Jesus that the apostles bore. If a town rejected the apostles, the Lord instructed them to wipe the dust off of their feet as a testimony against that town. Here is a town that rejected the Gospel. Here is a town that rejected the apostles. Here is a town that by doing so rejected Jesus. Jesus wanted to gather them to Himself as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but they were not willing. Their house was left to them forsaken, until or unless they would say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

If the town received the apostles then that town was blessing the ones who came in the name of the Lord. By receiving the apostles the town received the Gospel of Jesus and by receiving the Gospel of Jesus they received Jesus Himself. After all Jesus says to those whom He sends out in His name, "Whoever hears you, hears Me and whoever hears Me, hears the One who sent Me." Such a town blessed the ones who came in the name of the Lord. They blessed the apostles and by so doing received the Lord Himself. The Lord gathered that town to Himself, just like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

This truth applies to anyone whom the Lord has sent.

Once when the apostles were arguing about who was the greatest Jesus had a child stand in their midst and told them that if anyone received in a little child because the child came in the name of Jesus that person had received Jesus. It was the Lord's way of humbling His apostles. "I chose and appointed you to go in my name to all nations, but I could have chosen a child." And I think the Lord had an implied threat, "If you don't quit arguing about who is the greatest, I am going to send a child instead of you. I might get better results."

So the categories that we humans use to assess other people do not apply to the one who comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord may send anyone whom He wishes. Our standards make no difference no matter what our standards may be. The Lord sends whom the Lord sends. And I think the Lord sends people in deliberate defiance of whatever it is that we expect of someone whom the Lord sends, just because He is the Lord and does not need to submit to any kind of standards that we might put forward to assess those whom He should send.

Now at this point congregations usually engage in speculation. We like to look around in our lives and wonder who is it that may have come to me in the name of the Lord so that I may bless them and receive the blessing of Jesus.

When we look for the one whom the Lord has sent, we are typically looking for a person who has entered into our lives in some kind of unusual fashion. We look for a unique set of unexpected circumstances and we say to ourselves, "This person must be sent by God!"

The problem with this way of assessing things is that all the devil would have to do is set up an unusual set of circumstances to convince you that the person he sent had actually come from God. No. There is a more objective way to go.

Firstly and most importantly a person who comes in the name of the Lord will bear the message of the Lord. The apostles preached what Jesus told them to preach. They preached the Gospel of Jesus. While the epistles of the apostles and their recorded sermons in the book of Acts are not word for word identical with our Lord's preaching as we have it recorded in the Gospels, they are nevertheless the same message. Jesus had His way of saying it and Paul had his, but when examined we find that it is in fact the same message. Therefore the apostles came in the name of the Lord because they preached what the Lord preached.

Secondly, they came in the name of the Lord because the Lord told them to go. He told them to go and disciple the nations. He told them to preach repentance and forgiveness to all nations. He told them to start in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samarian and then the ends of the earth.

So anyone else who comes in the name of the Lord shall bear the message of the Lord and shall have been sent by the Lord Himself.

We can determine with ease whether or not a preacher bears the message of Jesus. We have the apostolic record of the message of Jesus. All we need to do is open our Bibles and compare what pastor is saying to what the Bible says to see if they match up. If they do not, we need a new preacher. If they do, then we say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

But how do we know that the preacher was sent by Jesus. Jesus has ascended into heaven. Visions are rare these days so if we wait for one of those there are going to be painfully few preachers coming in the name of the Lord.

The Lord therefore calls from where He resides. The Lord resides within His congregation. Therefore when the congregation calls God is sending. When a preacher comes under these circumstances then he has come in the name of the Lord and the Lord gathers you to Himself as hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

But does the Lord send only preachers? Are there not others that He sends? As it turns out the Lord has commandments regarding also parents. A child is commanded to honor his or her father or mother. God commands them to honor their father and their mother. Because God commands such honoring God Himself has sent the father and mother into the child's life. Fathers and mothers do a lot more than preach the gospel to their children. They also grant and preserve the life of their children and raise them to be good citizens in society. But they do also preach the Gospel to their children. They may not preach from a pulpit or with formal sermons like this one, but preach all the same they do. They come in the name of the Lord with the message of the Lord. They tell their children about the death and resurrection of Jesus and how it saves them. If they have trouble repeating what someone else has said, they can at the very least open the Bible and read it to their children. And thus the parents are the ones who come in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord and Jesus is there gathering your children to Him as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

I have used father and mother as an example, but really anywhere the Lord sends you with the message of the Gospel is a place where someone has come in the name of the Lord. God has issued commands sending you into the various callings of your lives such callings we are going to explore on Wednesday evenings at Lent services and everywhere where anyone goes because the Lord has sent them there and who carries the message of the Lord is someone who has come in the name of the Lord. Blessed is that person who comes in the name of the Lord. And wherever the Lord sends them or you, the Lord will be there gathering people to Himself as hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.