

As we continue our P.A.W.N. sermon series

- considering our Purpose,
- Assets,
- the Wows! Of God's work among us,
- and our Needs for carrying out God's mission,

today's message focuses on the **Assets** God has given us.

What resources do we have

for being a community of Jesus disciples

who make other disciples by baptizing and teaching them?

What has God already given us

for being a community of Jesus people

who are a blessing to our community?

In a few minutes, we will have a chance to talk together about our assets.

First, though, we must recognize the urgency of God's mission.

- *Now* is when Jesus is bringing the kingdom of God
- *Now* is when he is bringing salvation to those on the brink of eternal destruction
- *Now* is the time

I don't mean the time on our phones and watches,

but rather the **critical moment of God's action.**

Jonah, Jesus, and the apostolic church were all at the beginning of something new – just as we are in this R3 renewal process.

Jesus took his first step in public ministry with the announcement: The time is fulfilled.

In his very being, the *kairos* moment of God's action has arrived.

All the obeying

- And waiting and hearing
- and hoping and prophesying
- and expecting

of God's people from Abraham to the present **has been completed, fulfilled.**

– **Jesus is the keeping of God's promises of deliverance and salvation.**

God's faithfulness is now the good news

The promised Messiah – God's anointed Savior – is here.

Jesus is carrying out God's mission of salvation for all people.

Now let's consider – what resources does Jesus have to do this?

What are the assets God the Father has given his Son to carry out his mission?

- His voice
- The message to tell others
- His physical ability to go to where the people are
- A culture of generosity to provide for his physical needs
- His sacrificial giving – even to the point of sacrificing his own life
-

One important asset is that

**Jesus is not burdened with the notion
that he must carry out this mission all by himself.**

He calls others to help him

- to learn from him,
- to imitate him,
- and to share God’s good news alongside him.

Just as God called Jonah in days of old to carry his word to Nineveh,
so Jesus called the fishermen

Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow him,
to be his students, his disciples.

“I will make you fishers of men” he said.

**I will teach you to cast the net of God’s Word so I can catch many
people’s hearts.**

Please note that

- Jesus was not starting a marketing firm with these disciples;
- he wasn’t schooling them in gimmicks and techniques to sucker people or bait them;
- he wasn’t sharing an innovative business model of growth and expansion for them to manage.

Jesus was simply calling these disciples to share God’s salvation
– **to be, with him, the kingdom of God drawn near.**

The net is God’s Word

– **Jesus and the disciples are those who cast the net, who bring God’s Word to others.**

The church is the net-caster

– **a community of Gospel fisherfolk.**

Therefore, **the disciples themselves are assets** for Jesus to carry out his mission.

And that’s all that is needed for God’s mission

- ✓ his word,
- ✓ our voices,
- ✓ our abilities to go to where people are,
- ✓ resources to provide for our physical needs
- ✓ and sacrificial giving rooted in thankfulness for Jesus’ death and life

The Lord Jesus has promised to be with us to the end of time.

...

The good news – **Jesus is the kingdom of God come to us,**
so turn toward him and trust him to deliver you from all evil.

This good news, this Gospel of Jesus is always starting new things.

- New hearers
- New places
- New habits
- New energy
- New life
- New voices

Jesus' fishing net of the Gospel has been given to us

– to the whole church *and to each congregation* of the church.

So how will we –here in North York and York County -- cast out that net so that people will be caught for Jesus?

The time for so-called Lutheran shyness and PA Dutch reticence is past.

Jonah carried out God's mission even when he didn't want to.

God's time is fulfilled,

and God needs our voices,

our witness to the life-changing presence of Jesus in our world and in our lives.

By the power of forgiveness

and the life given in our Lord's body and blood,

we trust the Holy Spirit to give us courage to speak out so that others will see us and give glory to God.

So let us finish this message together.

Please gather in groups of 3 or 4 – preferably with people you don't know as well as your own family – and discuss these questions, also on the handout:

1. If this congregation were to think about starting something new, what are the most useful things we already have to use to get started?
2. What are the most important characteristics that God appreciates about us as a congregation?

3. If you could change or improve one thing about life in the local community before you died, what would you work on?

Take a moment individually to write down your responses to these questions and then share with your group. Have one person prepared to share a summary from your group.

Please pass all forms to the center aisle. The responses will be considered by the renewal team as guidance for new ministry possibilities. You only need to put your name on the sheet if you want renewal team members to contact you about your responses.

Wrap up –

- God has blessed us to be a blessing to the world.
- Jesus is present among us with the net of his Gospel.
- God has given us many assets with which to cast that net and fulfill his mission of making disciples.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to overcome hesitance and share the Gospel of Jesus with others.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power O Lord and come to us. Make us to be a good net for the Gospel to catch the hearts of people for your love and mercy. Open our eyes to recognize and cherish the assets you have given us for your mission, and open our hearts in eagerness to carry it out. In Jesus Name.
Amen