

Why We Proclaim the Gospel

Romans 10:9-21

'Tis the season for Lottie Moon. Each year during the Christmas season we focus on missions and taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. As we have studied through Paul's letter to the Romans we have seen that the gospel truly is good news. Paul said in chapter 1, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes," (Romans 1:16). I would say that the gospel is the best news all in the world. As the angel proclaim to the shepherds when Jesus was born, **"I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people,"** (Luke 2:10). But it isn't good news yet for approximately 42% of the world's population, who are in the unreached places and among the unreached people of the world. That means about 3 billion out of the over 7 billion people on earth are still unreached by the gospel (<https://joshuaproject.net/>). An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this group.

About 100,000 people around the world will die today, many of whom will have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel. If there is one thing we know from our time in Romans, it is that salvation is the gift of God to everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. God saves people by His grace through faith in Jesus. Here in Romans 10:9-10 Paul has clearly stated what a faith response to the gospel looks like,

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

In the verses which follow Paul explains the universal offer of the gospel in light of Israel's unbelief. Although this is not a missionary passage as such, it contains the theology that underlies the Great Commission. We see God's concern for the nations, His willingness to save all who believe, His desire to see the Good News go to every nation, and His patient grief and persistent love for those who reject His offer of salvation.

With that in mind, today I want us to consider the question of the church's concern for the people of the world. Why do we care, why do we give, why do we preach, why do we send, why do we go to the ends of the earth? As you consider these answers, I pray that your heart will be stirred by God's love, man's need and our responsibility. (I am in debted to Ray Pritchard for the ideas for today's outline).

Why do we care about those who have never heard about Jesus?

1. Because to be saved, people must believe Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)

True saving faith is a matter of the heart, or inner person. Verse 9-10 again says, **"... believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, ..."** Faith is the root; confession is the fruit. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, but if our faith is genuine, it will always bear the fruit of salvation.

Notice verse 9 says confess first and then believe. Verse 10 says believe, then confess. Why is that? Because it is possible to confess **"Jesus is Lord,"** and not mean it in your heart. No one is saved simply by repeating a few words. *It's the heart that matters to God because out of the heart flow all the issues of life.* (Proverbs 4:23, **Keep your**

heart with all diligence, For out of it [spring] the issues of life). First you believe in your heart, then you confess with your mouth. Confession means nothing unless it is backed up by deep heart belief in Jesus Christ.

The mouth confesses what the heart believes, and what the heart believes when it believes that God raised Jesus from the dead, is that Jesus is Lord. To confess that Jesus is Lord is to submit to and follow Christ as the rightful ruler and sovereign over you. If Jesus is not Lord over you, if you are not submitting to Him, it shows that you really don't believe in Him as He is revealed in the Bible. It would be like saying that you believe in a medicine that the doctor prescribed for your terminal illness, but you never take it. As James would say, true saving faith is a faith that produces results. It works.

So we proclaim the gospel to people all over the world because to be saved people must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Because the gospel is good news for all people (Rom. 10:11-13).

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Look at the word "**whoever**" in verses 11 & 13 and the words "**no distinction**" in verse 12. Those words remind me of what Paul wrote in Romans 3:22-23. Paul wrote, "...**For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" Since every person is a sinner, his or her main need is to be reconciled to God before he dies. There is no difference, no distinction—all people are sinners and need a Savior. And here in Romans 10, there is no distinction in how people are saved, verse 13, "**whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

Paul's main point here is that the gospel is good news for all. Any guilty sinner, no matter how good he has been or how sordid his past, anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

It wouldn't make sense to send missionaries to Africa if Africans couldn't be saved. Why invest in missionary outreach to India if Indians couldn't be saved? Why preach the gospel to those in jail if criminals couldn't be saved?

The text contains no limitations and no exceptions. When Paul says "**whoever**," he means all without distinction. Anyone, anywhere can be saved any time.

Cameron Townsend was a missionary in Guatemala trying to share the gospel with a tribe that had never heard the gospel. They spoke a little Spanish, but they had their own language, their own dialect. Not one word of the Bible had ever been translated into their language. One day Cameron Townsend gave one of the Indians there a Spanish Bible. But that man, who could not read Spanish, looked at Cameron Townsend and asked him a question that changed his life forever. "If your God is so great," he asked, "why can't he speak my language?" From that question came a dream, and from that dream came a vision, and from that vision came the greatest missionary translation organization in the history of the Christian church. From that question came the Wycliffe Bible Translators who have translated the Bible into over 600 languages in the last 60 years—because our God is great and he speaks every language.

Why do they do it? Because Jesus said to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). Because God wants to save people from “nation, tribe, tongue, and people,” (Rev. 14:6). They go because God always intended the Good News for all people.

3. Because no one can be saved without the proclaiming of the Gospel (v. 14).

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14) Paul lays out the progression very clearly: First comes the preaching. Then the hearing. Then the believing. Then the calling.

Evangelism is a chain of events. 10:14

- 1) You cannot be saved unless you believe.
- 2) You cannot believe unless you hear.
- 3) You cannot hear unless someone speaks to you.
- 4) No one will speak to you unless they are sent.

In order for people to call upon the name of the Lord, someone must preach the gospel to them. *God has ordained that no one can be saved without the preaching of the gospel.* Do you believe that? People are lost if they do not believe in Jesus. They cannot believe in Jesus unless they hear about Him. They cannot hear about Jesus unless there is someone to tell them. We must **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,”** (Mark 16:15).

Don't limit the word “preaching” to what your pastor does on Sunday morning. The word preach in verse 15 means *“to proclaim after the manner of a herald.”* The herald was sent out under the authority of the king to proclaim faithfully the king's message. Preaching the gospel is broad. It is sharing Jesus with the people you meet during the week. It is what you do over a cup of coffee when you share Christ with a friend. It's what you do when you talk to somebody on the phone or write a letter to a loved one and share the gospel. It is simply telling the good news.

We are concerned about missions because no one can be saved without the preaching of the gospel.

4. Because no one can preach until someone is sent (Rom. 10:15).

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" (v. 15). Paul here quotes from Isaiah 52:7, which is an Old Testament vision of a coming day of peace for Jerusalem, and ultimately for the whole world. The prophet speaks to a generation weary of war and frightened by the storm clouds gathering on the horizon.

In ancient times good news traveled by means of messengers who ran from one place to another. When an army marched off to war, no one knew for months how the battle had gone until the messenger came with the news. No one had a cell phone. You couldn't turn on the TV and watch the battle in real time as we can today. Everything depended on the messenger arriving safely, with news from distant lands. Oh, how happy the day when the messenger came running down the mountainside with good news of victory on his lips.

Jesus instructed us (Matt. 9:37-38), **“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**

So we who have experienced God's gracious salvation should pray for workers to be sent out. We should support these workers financially, emotionally, and prayerfully when they go out to difficult places. And, some of us may be called to go ourselves, because no one can preach until someone is sent.

5. Because faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (vv. 16-17).

Verse 16 says, **"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?'"**

Remember the problem that Paul is addressing here in chapters 9-11. Most of the Israelites rejected the good news. They have not obeyed the gospel. *Even the best missionaries have a lot more people say no than say yes.* That's the problem. Why didn't Israel accept the message of God's Good News in Christ? Isaiah says, **"Lord, who has believed our report?"** Even in his day, hundreds of years before Christ, the people largely rejected what God's prophet had to say. But he said it anyway, even when people didn't want to hear it because as Paul says in verse 17, **"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."**

How does saving faith come? It comes as we believe what God has said. How are people saved? By the gospel. Where do you hear the gospel? From the Word of God. This is why we must take the gospel everywhere, both here at home and to places where no one has heard. *Because they are lost unless somebody comes and preaches the gospel to them.*

What about the people who have never heard about Jesus? They are lost because saving faith comes only by hearing the word of Christ. *Someone has to go and preach to them.* If there were some other way, then we shouldn't bother to send our missionaries or to support them. But we do because saving faith comes from hearing the word of Christ.

6. Because God intends the gospel to go out to all the Earth (vv. 18-20).

Verse 18, **But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."** Israel heard the message over and over and over again. That's Paul's whole point. The Gentiles who never heard the message now embrace it but the Jews continue to reject it. The prophets spoke God's message and their voice was heard everywhere. God always intended to send the message beyond the borders of Israel. *He always planned to include the nations in His message of salvation.* In verse 19 Paul quotes Moses who spoke of a day when Israel would become envious because the Gentiles have heard the gospel, **But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."** God said to the people of Israel, "OK, fine, if you don't want my word, I'll give it to somebody else." That's what God does. If you don't want to listen, God will find somebody who will listen. If you don't want to respond, there are lots of people who will run to take the offer of free grace.

If one group won't listen, God will send the gospel to another group. Look at verse 20. **But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."** If the chosen people won't respond, he'll find some other people who will respond. God's plan has never been limited to a particular skin color or to one special nationality. *God doesn't play favorites.* God has always intended the riches of His grace for all who will call upon Him.

7. Because God reaches out patiently even to sinful people (v. 21).

Verse 21 tells us that God does not give up on sinful people, **But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."** This verse pictures God as the rejected lover. He continually reaches out towards sinners whom He loves, but they reject Him with disobedient, hardened hearts. 2 Peter 3:9 says, **"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."**

Turn on the TV or check your newsfeed, and you read about war, murder, pornography, drug abuse, broken homes, abandoned children, battered wives and worse. There are so many terrible problems in the world. Sin, suffering, death everywhere. Most of us would say, "Lord, you should have given up a long time ago." And God says, "Even though people turn away from me, my hands are still stretched out to them."

God stretches out His arms and invites His people to return to him, but they continue to reject him. Even so we follow God in reaching out to those who reject the message, even those very close to us, our own flesh and blood, and with "patient grief" we wait and pray and hope and keep on telling the good news.

We give and we pray and we send missionaries to the ends of the earth, and we keep on believing and we never give up even when people seem far from God because we know that in spite of the sin and disobedience we see all around us, God will save some. He will save whoever believes.

God still loves the world. If you doubt that, look to the cross. Survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died. Jesus has paid the price for your sin, He has done it all, and He will freely forgive you. This is the gospel we preach everywhere, all the time, in every home and to every nation. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News of peace with God.