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Sermon Notes

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How Salvation Reaches the Ends of the Earth

Romans 10:14-15

I. Dramatic Moment in the History of Missions

On Wednesday, May 30, 1792, at Friar Lane Baptist Chapel, Nottingham, England, William Carey put an incredible challenge into one of the most influential sermons ever preached in church history, what came to be called a “deathless sermon” based on Isaiah 54:2-3:

Earlier, 1792 *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*

William Carey had met opposition to his views from some ministers who strongly emphasized the sovereignty of God in all aspects of salvation that they opposed any human efforts at spreading the gospel to the unreached peoples of their generation.

“Deathless sermon’s” two exhortations: *1. Expect great things from God; 2. Attempt great things for God.*

This slogan became a by-word for the modern missionary movement.

Context: a defense for missions

So also in Romans 10, the apostle Paul is defending the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, even to the ends of the earth

Romans 10:14-15 is a strong theological basis for the worldwide missionary effort

Constant questions about missions... should we be going? Why should we? What is the biblical rationale for Christians leaving their home and going to some other country, or crossing a mountain range and reaching some other tribe? Is this what God wants the church to be doing?

Romans 10:14-15 says yes!!

***Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴
How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they***

are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

In seminary, I read an excellent book by John Murray: *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*

Speaks of the separate aspects of the magnificent redemptive plan of God

Christ's death on the cross was sufficient for the salvation of every human being on the face of the earth

BUT salvation still had an incredible journey to travel

The general road map of that journey was laid out in the Old Testament

So also Christ gave it to His apostles in the days after His resurrection and before His ascension to heaven

Luke 24:46-48 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

The road from Jerusalem to Irian Jaya has been the most glorious journey in history... a journey of blood and toil, of tears and suffering, of stunning news of great joy, of staggering cost, of miracles and prophecies; of humble heroes, both men and women; of courage and logic, of passion and persuasion... a journey traveled by messengers that Isaiah the prophet said would have "beautiful feet"

Romans 10:15 As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

It is the story of the Apostles, who tradition says traveled as far east as India, as far south as Ethiopia, as far west as Spain, as far north as Scythia, in each case dying martyr's deaths, except John, who died in exile in Patmos

From the apostolic age until today, the gospel has traveled across mountain ranges, across roaring white water rivers, across seas and oceans, across steaming jungles and tangled forests, across scorching deserts and empty tundras

The gospel message has been carried by humble and (for the most part) unknown servants who were willing that their lives be poured out in exchange for the eternal souls of peoples and tribes and nations who had never heard of Jesus

This long march of gospel advance is the greatest story in human history... nothing else rivals it

It is the story of the martyrs who faced years of opposition from Roman emperors, who traveled the Roman roads, the Appian Way and the Egnatian way... whose feet carried them to danger, arrest, and suffering in the Coliseum

It is the story of bold Boniface, whose feet carried him to the dark woods of Germany, who risked his life to cut down a sacred oak tree of Thor the thunder god in the forest of Lower Hesia and build a Christian church from the wood

It is the story of visionary Raymond Lull, whose feet carried him up the gangway of a ship headed for Tunisia to evangelize the fierce Muslim Saracens in an age when Crusaders were traveling a different road to the Holy Land to slaughter Muslims; Lull's feet carried him to decades of courageous ministry among the most terrifying gospel enemies of his day

It is the story of David Brainerd, whose feet took him to the cold woods of New England to reach the lost tribes of Indians and to die of consumption as a result

It is the story of the Moravians, whose feet carried them to the steamy hot sugar cane fields of the Caribbean, where they voluntarily sold themselves as slaves to reach the slaves toiling there

Of course, it is the story of the feet of William Carey and Adoniram and Ann Judson, of Hudson Taylor and David Livingstone, of John Paton and C.T. Studd, of Cameron Townsend, Lottie Moon, of Amy Carmichael, of Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, of Don Richardson and Bruce Olson... whose willingness to leave the comfort and security of their home, hearth, native land and to travel to the ends of the earth has meant the salvation of countless millions

BUT It is also the story of unsung heroes today who merely cross the street to invite a neighbor to church; of invisible gospel warriors who speak up for Christ at work; of humble unknown servants who walk door to door or visit hospitals or run rescue missions or give out water at Farmer's Markets... whose feet were no less beautiful than those who traveled farther with the good news of Christ

This is either the most glorious story in human history or the most absurd and tragically unnecessary

If those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ are fine as they are, then these missionaries and evangelists have feet that are not so beautiful... their feet have actually smelled up a good part of human history with their arrogant and pathetically misguided journeys

BUT if Christ's redemptive work **MUST BE APPLIED** to people to the ends of the earth so that they may be saved, and if the preaching of the gospel is essential to that process, then are their feet beautiful indeed

And that is precisely what Paul argues for here:

Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Context

- The Case of the Jews... their almost universal rejection of the gospel
- Part of that was hot opposition to any effort Paul made to preach the gospel to Gentiles
- Perfect example: Jewish opposition from Thessalonica... followed him to Berea

Acts 17:13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men ¹⁶ in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

- The Case for Preaching the Gospel... including to the Gentiles
- Paul is defending the propriety of his mission to the Gentiles
- MORE THAN THAT: He is also reaching out to Jews as well... for Paul usually preached the Gospel to them

I. A Glorious Chain of Questions

Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

A. Review: "Calling on the Name of the Lord"

1. Means to forsake any hopes of saving yourself... drowning people don't call for help until they are convinced they are drowning

2. Means to acknowledge sin and the need of salvation
3. Means to know what the Lord has revealed about His character through His word and His actions... He has made a name for Himself and to call on that name means to call on Him to act as He has revealed Himself before
4. Means to trust the Lord to keep His promises
5. Note the universal guarantee: EVERYONE who calls on the name of the Lord WILL BE saved

Now: Paul digs a little deeper and investigates how that happens around the world

He does so by asking a glorious chain of rhetorical questions that give amazing insights into how people are to be saved around the world

B. Paul's Use of Rhetorical Questions

1. A Glorious Chain of Questions

vs. 14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent?

2. All these questions are "rhetorical"

A **rhetorical question** implies that the answer is obvious--the kind of question that does not need actually to be answered. It is used for rhetorically persuading someone of a truth without argument

A rhetorical question is one that requires no answer because the answer is obvious and doesn't need to be stated. The speaker (of the rhetorical question) is not looking for an answer but is making some kind of a point, as in an argument.

The question is used to draw the reader into the power of the truth presented

3. All these questions assume the answer "They can't"

No one can call on someone they don't believe in, can they? NO!!

And no one can believe in someone of whom they've never heard, can they? NO!!

And no one can hear of something without someone telling them, can they? NO!!

And no one can tell them unless they are sent, can they? NO!!

Paul's assumptions here are amazing

C. Prior to Calling on the Name of the Lord is Faith

vs. 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?

No one can call on someone they don't believe in, can they? NO!!

1. Before anyone cries out to the Lord for salvation, they must first believe in their hearts
2. Every true sinner's prayer ever prayed emerged as a fruit from saving faith
3. First the sinner believes, THEN they call on the name of the Lord!
4. "Calling on the Name of the Lord" is a FRUIT of justifying faith
5. YOU BELIEVE, THEN you Call on His name!!

D. Prior to Faith is Hearing

vs. 14-15 And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

1. Before you can call on Christ, you have to hear of Christ
2. You have to have the basic facts of Christ's life and saving work
 - a. You have to hear of His incarnation, how He was born of a virgin
 - b. How He lived a sinless life
 - c. How He did great signs and wonders to prove His deity
 - d. How He preached the truth among the people
 - e. How He was arrested, condemned, and executed on a cross
 - f. How His blood was shed as an atoning sacrifice for our sins
 - g. AND How He was gloriously raised to life on the third day
3. These facts about Christ are essential to saving faith
4. These facts are the basis of saving faith... we are trusting IN the Christ who did all those things, believing that they are true

E. Prior to Hearing is Preaching

vs. 14 And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

1. BUT we cannot know any of those facts without someone preaching them to us

2. Behind this question is the understanding that, while knowledge about the Creator is evident in creation, knowledge about the Redeemer is not

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

3. You can't know about Christ from looking at the stars, or from listening to a bubbling mountain stream, or from watching an eagle soar... these things all testify to the existence and nature of God the Creator
4. But without a preacher, no one will know a thing about Christ

F. Prior to Preaching is Sending

vs. 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent?

1. Paul here is referring immediately to himself... he was SENT by God to preach the gospel
2. Paul constantly referred to himself as what he was, an "apostle"
 - a. "apostle" literally means "sent one"...
 - b. one sent with a message from a king or a governor or important person
3. There must be a journey traveled by these royal messengers who bear the good news of the gospel
4. Who does the sending? None other than God Almighty and Jesus Christ

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle-- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead

5. Christ Himself was sent by God, an apostle from heaven preaching the good news

Luke 4:42-44 At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

6. This commission all the apostles received... sent by the Resurrected Christ, who was Himself sent by God

Mark 3:13-14 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach

John 20:21-23 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

7. This commission was clearly intended to go to the end of time, not just for the first generation of apostles

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 28:20 "And surely I will be with you always, even to the end of the age."

II. The Beauty of the Missionary History

Romans 10:15 As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

The Missionary history is the second most glorious and most beautiful story in human history in that it completes the Redemptive Plan of God... the only thing more beautiful and glorious is the Gospel itself

A. Paul's Use of Isaiah's Quote

1. Paul's constant desire: root his doctrine and practice in Old Testament revelation
2. Here: Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

3. Isaiah speaks frequently of the joy of messengers who bring good news to desperate Israelites, who were waiting to hear

Illus. In the ancient world, when there were no telephones, or satellites, or internet... good news traveled by foot

Once extensive human empires arose, networks for communication had to be devised to keep the empire under the authority of the Emperor

The Fall of Babylon was predicted by Jeremiah, as was the relay of the message by a courier system:

Jeremiah 51:31 One runner runs to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken on every side

The roads built by the Romans beginning in 312 B.C. form the most famous of these ancient networks. The Roman Empire had 51,000 miles of paved highways and a network of secondary roads, which fanned out to link Rome with the distant areas of the empire. Messengers bringing the news of Nero's death covered 332 miles in thirty-six hours.

New World:

Spanish writers refer to the seasoned runners among the Aztec of Mexico "who could run like the wind." They moved in relays to convey messages. These men, "trained from childhood," covered one to two hundred miles a day, bearing hides covered with hieroglyphic writing. Hernan Cortes wrote that within twenty-four hours of his landing in Mexico in May 1519, runners had described to Montezuma, 260 miles away, his ships, men, guns and horses.

The first messengers of Christ's resurrection also ran to tell others:

Matthew 28:5-8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

So also Philip ran to witness to the Ethiopian Eunuch:

Acts 8:29-31 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." ³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. ³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

So Isaiah predicted the day when messengers would cross high mountains, their "beautiful feet" carrying them to the ends of the earth with Good News

B. The Beauty of Feet?

1. Isaiah and Paul both speak of the beauty of feet... the feet of messengers who bring incredibly good news
2. BUT feet are not generally considered beautiful... in fact, they are usually considered filthy, the lowest part of the body
3. When the prostitute washed and anointed Jesus' feet with her tears, she was putting herself totally under Him, considering Him far greater than she was
4. When John the Baptist wanted to explain how great Christ was, he said:

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

5. When Christ wanted to show maximum servanthood, He washed His disciples feet, dirty as they were from their travel along dusty roads of Palestine

6. The fact is, feet are not very beautiful!! Despite the efforts some of you women make to beautify your feet... foot spas can very much improve the appearance of feet
7. But even with an expensive pedicure, few women would say their feet are their best feature
8. The quote here is really referring to the way the people will feel about the value of the message that was preached... their joy will be so great that even the FEET of the messengers who bring the good news will seem beautiful

Proverbs 25:25 Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.

Illus. Ee Taow... Mark & Gloria Zook told the Mouk people of Christ; when they understood the gospel, the whole village erupted in a 2 ½ hour, celebration and grabbed Mark and Gloria and threw them in the air... their joy in the Gospel of Christ was so overwhelming, even the feet of the missionaries seemed beautiful

III. Facing Difficult Questions

A. What About Those Who Haven't Heard the Gospel?

1. The thrust of these verses is clear: there are people who have not heard of Jesus Christ

Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

2. The implication is also clear... without hearing of Christ, they will not be saved
3. Because of the form of this section (rhetorical questions), it leaves open the possibility of God doing whatever He chooses to get the gospel to people, including sending angels to preach to them (an angel preaches the eternal gospel in Revelation 14:6)
4. However, the thrust is clear: people who haven't heard the gospel are lost
5. My night with John MacArthur

Illus. Summer, 1983: Tremont Temple Baptist Church, Boston: MacArthur there to answer questions in a Q & A format; I asked this very question: "What about those who haven't heard the gospel?" He answered, "You want to say they're okay... that they don't need the gospel. But if that's true, then why should we share the gospel ever again? All we would be doing is bringing eternal death to them when they reject it!" What an irony! In that case, if unreached people are FINE the way they are, then all the evangelists and missionaries are doing is bringing eternal death and hell when they preach the good news!

B. If God is Sovereign, Why Is Preaching Necessary?

1. This is the very issue William Carey sought to address in His tract and His sermon
2. Some people, extreme on the sovereignty of God over salvation, said to William Carey

"Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine."

3. That God is capable of revealing Himself and converting people directly is unquestioned... God can do anything
4. BUT God has chosen to use certain means to accomplish His purposes... and clearly here He has chosen to use missionary traveling and preaching to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel; and clearly He wants human beings to join Him in His saving work

Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

C. Isn't Preaching Becoming Obsolete?

1. We are a modern, technologically advanced people who love the flash of multimedia presentations
2. Television flashes images at our eyes at the rate of several per second during the average commercial
3. Movie makers use state of the art high-end supercomputers to create special effects that boggle the mind and assault the imagination
4. But when you go to church, all you get is old-fashioned preaching... some guy standing behind a podium and talking
5. Furthermore, this preacher is like some authority figure telling you things you have to do to be saved... and we are anti-authority

6. For this reason, more and more churches are declaring preaching dead... they are going to skits and multimedia presentations to try to reach their audiences with the Gospel
7. One church removed the pulpit and placed four barstools up instead; he got four church members to discuss spiritual things while he sat cross-legged on the floor listening to what they had to say
8. Some brands of modern worship called “emerging” worship have eliminated content altogether and go more for a sensory experience, moving people with feelings and sights and sounds... touching silk clothes, hearing the dripping of water, tasting bitter and sweet things... all in the name of spirituality
9. BUT Romans 10:14-15 implies that preaching is going to be with us until the end of time, because people must have the content about Christ, and 10:17 says plainly:

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

D. Is Preaching the Only Method God Can Use?

1. Depends what you mean by preaching
2. Preaching the gospel can be taken several ways:
 - a. First, like this... a formal setting, a recognized preacher communicating
 - b. Second, it can be simple evangelism... as the truths of the gospel are communicated by word of mouth
3. The content of the gospel can be related by all kinds of media: books, tracts, comic books, Trans-World Radio, Television, Internet, DVDs and CD and on and on
4. However, God primarily desires human beings to go and live and speak and proclaim the gospel

E. Isn't Missions Arrogant?

1. Missions would be arrogant if we were preaching ourselves as the Saviors of the world
2. But Paul settled that forever

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

3. It would be arrogant if we were claiming that a truth WE ORIGINATED is the truth for all the world

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

4. It is not arrogant to claim that the Only Begotten Son of God who died on the cross is the only Savior of the world

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

IV. Application

A. Come to Christ!!

B. Christians: Ask yourself two questions based on Carey's "deathless sermon"

EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD, ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD

- 1) What great things do I expect God to do in world missions?
- 2) What great things have I attempted for His name, or am I willing to attempt for His name

Worldwide evangelism: supporting missionaries, praying, going on short term trips,

Local evangelism: 3 x 3, witnessing in your neighborhood, witnessing in the workplace

C. FBC Must Be a Sending Church

Old Testament was "Come and see"

Matthew 12:42 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

New Testament: "Go and tell"

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

We must be more and more of a launching pad for world missions

We've seen great growth in missions passion and interest:

More and more short term mission trips, and more and more of you getting involved

More and more Southeastern Students coming with their passion for missions

More and more retired people willing to give their lives

WHAT ABOUT YOU??

**EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD, ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR
GOD**