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GOOD NEWS FOR ALL

Romans 10:11-15

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Romans Lesson 65

Good News for All
Romans 10:11-15

The good news: you've just inherited \$10 million from a distant relative that you haven't seen in decades! The bad news: no one told you about it, so your life is the same as always. Good news is only *good* news for you when you hear it and act on it.

The gospel is the best news in the world, but it isn't good news at this point for approximately two billion (28%) of the world's population, who are presently cut off from access to the gospel (Mission to Unreached Peoples, www.mup.org). Viewed another way, out of 16,789 people groups in the world, 6,954 (41.4%) are still unreached. 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. Of these almost 7,000 groups, 2,087 are over 50,000 in population. Out of every \$1.00 (U.S.) of Christian giving to all causes, less than one penny goes toward pioneer church planting among least-reached people groups. I encourage you to go to the Joshua Project web site (www.joshuaproject.net) and educate yourself with the most up to date statistics on where we're at in the cause of world missions.

In our text, Paul makes a simple point that in some way will change the direction of your life when it grips you:

Since the gospel is good news for all,
we must proclaim it to all.

Paul was trying to set the stage for his journey through Rome, where he could gain the support of the church there for his mission to the Gentiles in Spain (Rom. 15:24). To do that, he had to deal with two criticisms: First, that his message clashed with the Old Testament; second, that his ministry to the Gentiles erased what the Jews saw as a fundamental distinction between the two groups. So here Paul cites the Old Testament repeatedly (10:11, 13, 15; plus, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21) to show that his message came right out of the Jewish Scriptures. And he shows that the same Lord is Lord

of all people and has given one message for all to be saved. In 10:11-13 Paul makes the point that the gospel is good news for all. In 10:14-15, he shows that we must proclaim it to all.

1. The gospel is good news for all (10:11-13).

Romans 10:11-13: "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

In 10:11, Paul cites from Isaiah 28:16. In 9:33, he cited the same verse more fully, but here he only cites the last part of the verse, changing "he" into "whoever," thus broadening the application. Then in 10:12, he explains why his broader application is valid, namely, because the same Lord is Lord of all people, Jew and Gentile alike (see 3:29-30). Then (10:13), to show that he isn't making this up, but that it comes right out of the Jewish Scriptures, Paul cites Joel 2:32, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." His point is that the gospel is good news for all people, Jew and Gentile alike, if they will respond to it.

A. All people have one primary need: to be saved before they die and face judgment.

"Whoever" occurs in verses 11 & 13 and "no distinction" in verse 12. In 3:22-23 Paul wrote, "for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." That's the bad news. But here his focus is on the good news, that there is no distinction when it comes to receiving the abundant riches that God pours out on all who call on Him. But before people will call out to God to save them, they must realize that they're in deep trouble and need to be saved. All people are guilty before God and headed for death and judgment. Thus all people need to be saved.

It's important to keep this in mind when you talk to educated people about Christ. It's easy to be intimidated by their great learning. They will argue that evolution is true or that the Bible is full of contradictions or that a loving God could not allow all the suffering in the world. But these things are just smokescreens to keep you from getting too close to their real need: They are sinners who stand condemned before a holy God. They have past and current

sins that have alienated them from God and have created problems in their lives. Their number one need is to be saved before they die and face judgment.

On one occasion, the great Welsh medical doctor turned preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, preached to a congregation at an Anglican Church in Oxford made up largely of students. He preached to them as he would have preached anywhere else. After the service, it was announced that Dr. Lloyd-Jones would be available to answer questions in another room. He got there, expecting just a few people, but the room was packed.

The first question came from a bright young student, who got up and spoke with all the grace and polish of a university debater. After paying a few compliments to the preacher, he said that he had one great difficulty as a result of the sermon. He really could not see but that that sermon might not equally well have been delivered to a congregation of farm laborers or anyone else. As he sat down, the room erupted with laughter.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones replied that he was most interested in the question, but really could not see the questioner's difficulty because he regarded both undergraduates and graduates of Oxford University as being just ordinary common human clay and miserable sinners like everybody else. Thus their needs were precisely the same as those of the farm laborer or anyone else. And so he had preached as he had quite deliberately. This also provoked a lot of laughter and even cheering. They got his point and they gave him a most attentive hearing from there on (*D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, by Iain Murray [Banner of Truth], 2:76-77).

Since every person is a sinner, his or her main need is to be reconciled to God before he dies. It's also important to keep this in mind when you're talking with a good person. You may be tempted to think, "He doesn't need to be saved. Look at what a nice person he is. Look at how kind and loving he is. He puts most Christians I know to shame!" And, of course, the good person agrees with you, even though he might never say so. He compares himself with others and thinks, "Surely it will go well with me when I stand before God. I'm not like other people!" (See Luke 18:11-12.) But he's blind to his pride and self-righteousness. The good person is usually the most difficult type to reach with the gospel, because he

doesn't see his need for it. Show him God's holy law, which is designed to expose his sin (Rom. 3:19-20). Because all people are sinners, they all have the same need to be saved before they die and face judgment.

B. All people need one message: the good news that whoever believes in Jesus will not be put to shame.

"Not be disappointed" (10:11) is literally, "not be put to shame." This does not refer to psychological shame, but rather to not being put to shame with a guilty verdict at the judgment (Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* [Baker], p. 561). It means that at the judgment God will vindicate the one who believes in Jesus.

Let's face it, we all have more than a closet full of secret reasons to be put to shame at the judgment. Have you ever thought about what it would be like if your every thought was automatically broadcast out loud without your being able to control it? Even if you had the thought in private, it automatically went on your Facebook page, which was open for everyone to see. We'd all die of embarrassment! But, of course, the God before whom all things are open and laid bare (Heb. 4:13) knows our every thought!

But the good news is that on the cross, Jesus bore all of our guilt and shame so that the one who believes in Him will not be put to shame at the final judgment. Paul explains (10:12) that this good news applies equally to the religious Jew and to the pagan Gentile, because the same Lord is Lord of all. Some think that *Lord* refers to God the Father, and it may, but since Paul has just said that Jesus is Lord (10:9) and since the context of 10:11-17 is all about believing in Jesus, it is more likely that *Lord* in both 10:12 & 13 refers to Jesus. He is the Lord of all. The Lord Jesus abounds in riches for all who call on Him. If anyone calls on the name of Jesus, he will be saved.

Paul loves to talk about the spiritual riches that God delights to pour out on sinners who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Note some of the references (see, also, Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 6:10; 9:11; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27):

Romans 2:4: "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads to repentance?"

Romans 9:23: "And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory."

2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

Ephesians 1:7: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Ephesians 2:7: "So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 3:8: "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ."

Ephesians 3:16: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man."

The point in our text is that no matter how sinful your past, if you will believe in the Lord Jesus and call upon Him to save you, He will do it out of the abundant riches of His grace. This good news applies to every person from every race and from every walk of life: Call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved.

Thus all people have one primary need: to be saved before they die and face judgment. All people need one message: the good news that whoever believes in Jesus will not be put to shame.

- C. All people need to hear that there is one way to be saved: to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul expresses the way to be saved in two synonymous phrases: to believe in Him (10:11); and, to call upon Him, or to call upon His name (10:12, 13). In 10:14, he distinguishes them, as I will explain in a moment. But in 10:11-13, he uses them to mean the same thing.

To believe in Christ means to rely on or trust in Him as the One who died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin. He died

as the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice which satisfied God's wrath) for all who believe in Him, so that God can now be both just, because the penalty was paid, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Him (3:25-26). To believe in Christ implicitly means that you stop believing in yourself and your own good works as your hope for eternal life.

In 10:13 Paul cites Joel 2:32, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." Peter quotes the same verse in his sermon in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21). To call upon the Lord (His "name" means, who He is in all His attributes) implies that the one calling is in trouble or great need. This is reinforced by the word *saved*, which means that the person needs to be rescued from the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Both terms imply that the one calling out has nothing in himself to offer God. He isn't doing basically okay, and just needs a few pointers on how to get ready for judgment. He can't help God out. If he thinks that he can offer God anything, then he doesn't understand his situation. He is guilty of rebellion against the holy God. If his case comes to trial, he will be condemned. So he cries out (Luke 18:13), "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!"

So Paul's main point here is that the gospel is good news for all. Any guilty sinner, no matter how sordid his past, who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. John Bunyan has a wonderful treatise, "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved," based on Jesus' words to the apostles just before His ascension (Luke 24:47), "that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations," and then He added, "beginning from Jerusalem." Jerusalem was the city where sinners crucified the Savior. But *our* sin also crucified Him. There is forgiveness for all Jerusalem sinners. Proclaim it to the nations!

2. Since the good news is for all, we must proclaim it to all (10:14-15)

Romans 10:14-15: "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'How

beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

I can only skim over these verses, but before we look at them, let me briefly address a criticism often raised by those who deny the doctrine of God’s sovereign election. They argue that the doctrine of election undermines evangelism and missions because if God has chosen someone, he will be saved. If he isn’t elect, our efforts are in vain. So, why witness?

But Paul, who wrote so strongly about God’s choice of Jacob and rejection of Esau while they were still in the womb (9:11-13), also wrote these wonderful verses about the need to preach the gospel to all people. He wasn’t contradicting himself. God chooses who will be saved and He chooses the means through which they will be saved, namely, preaching the gospel to them (2 Tim. 2:10).

Paul strings together a logical list of rhetorical questions to explain the process of how the gospel goes forth, and then backs it up with Scripture. To work from the foundation outward, the process begins with sending out preachers; they preach; people hear, believe, and call on the Lord.

- A. Sending: We should ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest.

Romans 10:15a: “How will they preach unless they are sent?” God saved Paul and appointed him as a minister and a witness, sending him to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21; 26:16-17). The church acts as a secondary sender, affirming God’s call to those He sends (Acts 13:1-3). To take the gospel to every people, as Jesus commanded in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:49), those who are sent out need to cross cultural and linguistic barriers to communicate the gospel to those who have not heard. Jesus instructed us (Matt. 9:38), “Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

So we who have experienced God’s gracious salvation should pray for workers to be sent out. We should support such workers financially, emotionally, and in prayer when they go out to difficult places. And, some of us may be called to go ourselves.

- B. Preaching: The sent ones proclaim the authoritative message of the King regarding His Son.

Preach and *preacher* come from the Greek word meaning *herald*. The herald was sent out under the authority of the king to proclaim faithfully the king's message. He didn't make up his own message that would be more palatable to the hearers. He might get killed by an angry mob who didn't like the king's message, but he still had to tell them the truth. Those sent out with the gospel cannot tweak it to fit what people may want to hear. They have to tell them that they have sinned against the holy God and rightfully are under His judgment so that they will see their need for the Savior. They have to confront people's universal belief that they are good enough to merit salvation so that they will abandon their good works and call on the Lord to save them.

C. Hearing: Those who hear the preacher must understand what they hear.

This implies that those sent must be able to communicate in the language and culture of the hearers, but also that they not compromise the message in an attempt not to offend. The cross is inherently offensive, because it confronts our sin. This also means that as the sent ones proclaim the gospel, the Holy Spirit must open the deaf ears of the hearers, who cannot understand spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:14; Acts 16:14; Isa. 6:9-10). Thus the proclamation of the gospel must always be undergirded with prayer.

D. Believing and calling on the Lord: The message must be believed to be effective.

As I said, in 10:11-13, Paul uses believing in Christ and calling upon His name somewhat interchangeably. But in 10:14, he separates them to bring out two aspects of saving faith. People must believe in the sense of giving assent to the truth of the gospel or they will not call on Him for salvation. If you do not believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be and that God raised Him from the dead, you won't cry out to Him to save you. And so a person must believe intellectually that Jesus is the risen Savior, but also he must call out to Him to save him from his sins. Intellectual belief alone without commitment is not saving faith. Finally,

E. The message believed: "Good news of good things."

Paul again (10:15b) cites Scripture (Isa. 52:7), "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things." You

don't normally look at a person's feet, especially dirty, callused, bleeding feet, and say, "Wow, what a beautiful person!" But this person has dirtied and bloodied his feet to bring good news of good things: God will freely forgive all your sins through Jesus Christ if you will believe in Him and call out to Him to save you!

If we preach, "If you will clean up your life and try hard to obey God and not sin, you might earn a spot in heaven, although you can never be sure," we're not preaching good news. Any message of doing good works to earn salvation is not good news, because it depends on sinful people and sinful people inevitably fail and fall short. The good news is, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." That's the wonderful news that we proclaim.

Conclusion

As long as there are billions of people that have never heard that news, we must commit ourselves to getting the good news to them. There is an African proverb, "There is only one crime worse than murder on the desert, and that is to know where the water is and not tell." We know where the water is! We've got the greatest news in the world: God forgives every sinner who trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior! We've got to tell everyone.

Here are a few practical steps. First, begin locally. Begin praying for the salvation of those you have regular contact with. Pray for opportunities to talk to them about the Savior. Reach out to the international students in our city. Second, educate yourself about world missions. Read about missions. Join one of our A-teams. Pray for our missionaries. Give to the cause of missions, especially to those trying to take the gospel to those who have yet to hear. Finally, God may call some of you to go to those who have never heard. With Isaiah (6:8) respond, "Here I am. Send me!"

Application Questions

1. A person asks, "What about the billions who have never heard about Jesus? Will God judge them? Is this fair?" Your reply?
2. Someone says, "I believe that there are many ways to God. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians all will get to heaven if they are sincere, good people." Your reply?
3. How could this message change your prayer life? How could it change how you spend your time and money? Your goals?
4. How can a person know whether God is calling him/her to devote his/her life to the cause of world missions?

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