

The Gospel Announced: The Gospel Must Be Preached

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Date: 02 March 2014

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] So, if you would like a pen, somebody's passing them around, and the sheets, sorry, could you pass those?

If anybody would like to take notes, there's other sheets there being passed around as well. And we have two readings this morning. The first one is from Isaiah, chapter 52, and the second reading will be from Romans.

We're going through a series at the minute from Romans, chapter 9 to 11. So, if you want to take notes, there's a sheet.

You can either use the back of the news program or the notes that are being passed around. And Chris and Joy are going to come and read for us this morning.

So, whenever you're right, thank you. The first reading is from Isaiah, chapter 52, starting at verse 4, and that's on page 739 of the Red Church Bible.

[1 : 23] That's Isaiah 52, beginning at verse 4. For this is what the Sovereign Lord says. At first, my people went down to Egypt to live.

Lately, Assyria has oppressed them. And now what do I have here, declares the Lord? For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock, declares the Lord. And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. Therefore, my people will know my name. Therefore, in that day, they will know that it is I who foretold it.

Yes, it is I. 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. Listen, your watchmen lift up their voices. Together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem.

[2 : 27] For the Lord has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations.

And all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. The second reading is from Romans, chapter 10, verse 13.

It's page 1137. Romans 10, 13. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

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?

And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful on the feet of those who bring good news. But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.

[3 : 31] For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message. And the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask, did they not hear?

Of course they did. Their voice has gone out into all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world. Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, I will make you envious by those who are not a nation.

I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding. And Isaiah boldly says, I was found by those who did not seek me. I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.

But concerning Israel, he says, all day long, I've held up my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people. Thanks, Chris.

And thank you, Joy. Please keep your Bibles open at that section in Romans chapter 10, looking at verses 13 to 21.

[4 : 48] If you've missed any of the talks, you can hear them online. And also, if you look in our new sheet, there are resources that you can look up under gotherefore.com related to the talks as well.

I spoke to somebody this morning who told me they've just read the little black book on predestination and they said it was excellent. So, if you want to know who that is, it was Stephen and you can go and find out why he thought it was good.

So, yeah. And I didn't even pay him to say that, by the way. Let's pray and ask for God's help. Father, thank you that you have spoken your good news to us through your son, the Lord Jesus. And we thank you that it has been recorded for us and written down for us in your word. We pray that we would better understand what that message is, but also our response to it and our calling to make that message known in every nation and to every people.

We pray that what we think and look through this morning would impact us in such a way that lives and people will be changed.

[6 : 26] and that people will come to know you as a result. So, please help us this morning, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, as a kid in primary school, I remember being terribly upset and disappointed because I didn't get invited to a birthday party.

Out of all my friends, it seemed I was the only one who didn't get to go. Maybe they weren't my friends after all. My kids don't think I've got any friends anyways, but I do.

But the point is this, being excluded can be a terrible experience because we all want to be invited to the party.

Well, the good news is we have all been given the ultimate invitation and no one is excluded. Look at verse 12 of Romans 10.

[7 : 29] For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. He says, it doesn't matter what your background is, whether you are a religious person or an irreligious person, whether you go to church or you don't go to church.

The same Lord is Lord of all and he richly blesses all who call on him for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

God in his grace has written an open invitation to all people to receive his salvation. There's no discrimination based on gender, race, or religion.

God has no favorites. He generously invites all people everywhere in every nation to know and to come and experience his gift of salvation.

And salvation is something that we all desire. Whoever we are, we all long to be saved from things like disease and death, sickness and suffering.

[8 : 37] suffering. We long to be rescued from oppression and injustice. We want a world where there's no more war or violence. But as the Bible makes clear and indeed the book of Romans makes very clear, these are the results and the consequences of our rebellion and our disobedience against God.

This is where the source of the problem lies. The cause of all the mess in our world and in our lives, the Bible tells us, is sin. It's summarised for us very well if you just want to have a quick look back to Romans chapter 6 verse 23.

Romans 6 verse 23. It's just a short summary where it says this, For the wages of sin is death.

Romans 6 verse 23.

For the wages of sin is death, death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. So the salvation that God has come to give, the salvation that he comes to offer, deals with the root of the problem.

He doesn't just deal with surface issues, he gets right down into the nitty-gritty of our own hearts to deal with the sin that is there and instead to offer new and eternal life through Jesus.

[10 : 06] Now that is good news, that is great news, but, go back to chapter 10 verse 14. It is good news that there is this offer of salvation, but, verse 14, how then can they call on the one they have not believed in?

In other words, how are your friends and your family ever going to know about this gift of salvation? What about those who live in other nations and in other parts of the world?

How are they ever going to hear about this invitation of new and eternal life? Well, first, everyone must hear the gospel.

everyone must hear the gospel and there's three reasons why. Reason number one, to believe I must hear. Let's read verse 14 again. 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 never heard? You see, the only right response to this invitation is belief or faith in Jesus Christ.

[11:27] look back at verse 11. As the scripture says, anyone who trusts in him, anyone who trusts in Jesus will never be put to shame.

The same theme is repeated in verse 13. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, everyone who cries out in faith will be saved.

But the question being asked in verse 14 is, how can people call out in faith to Jesus? How can people cry out to God if they've never even heard of Jesus?

It's like you or I getting an invite to a party and at the bottom of it you get the usual RSVP except for there's got no name and there's got no contact of whom you must respond to.

The invitation is useless unless you know who you have to respond to. You've got to know who it's from and who you are responding to.

[12:38] You see, faith in Jesus is the only way we can come to experience his gift of salvation. So people must hear about who Jesus is and what he has done.

so to believe I must hear. Second, to hear someone must preach. Look at the last part of verse 14. And how can they hear without somebody preaching to them? How is anybody going to know unless somebody actually tells them? You may have heard of this phrase before.

Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words. Now I know what people are trying to say when they say that.

Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words. Well I think it's a little bit unhelpful because it suggests that you can tell the story of Jesus without speaking, without words.

[13:40] It's the same as saying feed the hungry and if necessary use food. Well of course you need to use food to feed the hungry and of course you need to use words to be able to tell the gospel story.

People aren't going to know the story simply by just looking at your life. It needs to be communicated through words, through a message, just as we're speaking and talking now. The gospel is a word, it is a message.

God spoke to us clearly. It's a word about forgiveness and hope, of transformation, of change, of new and eternal life in him. And those who've heard that message must tell that same story of salvation to those who haven't yet heard that message.

So to hear, someone must tell them. And reason number three, to preach, people must be sent. Look at verse 15. And how can they preach unless they are sent? You see, that tells us something about us. We're people who love our comforts.

[14:53] I love my comforts. And I'm never going to go anywhere or do anything that's going to cause me trouble unless I was actually sent. This morning I read in an email of two people who've just been recently arrested in North Korea.

A man aged 75 from Australia has been arrested because he was bringing the good news of Jesus to people in that country.

Now you would never do that knowing what that country is like unless you've been sent. And the point is we have been sent. The risen Christ who died and who rose again has sent his people into every community and into every nation with the good news.

And if we weren't sent we wouldn't go but he has sent us. Indeed that's a big part of what the letter of Romans is about. If you go back to chapter 1 verse 1.

Chapter 1 verse 1. Here we've got two bookends. The very first verse and the very last verse. So read this.

[16:07] Chapter 1 verse 1. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.

That's his very beginning, his introduction. I've been set apart for the gospel. I've been sent with the gospel. To do what? Well go to the very end of the book, to the very last two verses.

chapter 16 verse 26. He's been set apart for the gospel and here's the reason.

Look at the end of verse 26. So that all nations, all people, might believe and obey him.

Might believe and obey Jesus. To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.

This is the whole purpose.

[17 : 11] It's a great big theme of this letter. It's a call for the local church, people like you and me, to be on a global mission. We are meant to see that the story of salvation has to be made known in every nation.

That is God's desire. Do you remember the vision, the picture we read this morning at the very beginning in Revelation? People from every tribe, tongue and nation gathered together. That's the end of the story and that's how we're going to get there. By proclaiming the good news to every nation, to every people, in every language. Now to do this is a most beautiful thing. If you want to do a beautiful thing, then look at verse 15 of Romans chapter 10.

How then can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

[18 : 20] It's a beautiful thing to do. That comes from a quote in Isaiah chapter 52. Let's turn to that. It's on page 739 of your Bible.

Page 739, Isaiah 52. Whenever you get a quote like that in the New Testament, it's wanting us to go back and see what's being said.

We can read the whole context. Chris read to us from it earlier. We pick it up in chapter 52 verse 7. The image here is of a messenger.

and he's running to a city to tell them, a city that's been held in captivity and in slavery, that he's got some good news, that a battle has taken place and a victory has come and the enemy has been defeated and the people are now free.

So read Isaiah 52 verse 7. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. Here's the messenger running towards the city.

[19 : 26] He's come to proclaim peace, who brings good tidings, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns, he's won the victory, he's won the battle, he rules.

Verse 9. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

And the salvation that he has won, look at verse 10, is not just for one people, the Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Go back to Romans 10. You see, it is a beautiful thing to tell the story of Jesus, to bring the good news of a victory, that is essentially what we are saying, that Jesus through his death on the cross has come to deal with sin and the consequences of sin.

He has defeated our greatest enemy, death itself, by rising again from the grave, and in its place he offers eternal life in his kingdom forever, where there is no more war, no more suffering, no more evil, no more death.

[20 : 47] death. That is the most beautiful thing you could do for anyone, is to share this story with other people.

And as a church, we seek to be beautiful feet. That's why we're supporting the Kinsale Church Planting Project. People going, people going to live, people bringing the good news of Jesus to those who don't know.

That's why we're going to partner with a small church in Kosovo this summer, partnering with other Christians who are seeking to tell the story of Jesus with those who have not yet heard.

That's why as a church we're looking to appoint and train up others who will go and teach the good news in other parts of this community and country. that's why we have polo, that's why we have the rock, all different means to let people know that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

That's why we exist, that's why the church is here. And it happens not just in organized ways, but it happens as you go to college and you meet with your fellow students and you're chatting with them.

[22 : 09] It happens when you're in work and you're meeting with your colleagues over lunch. It happens if you're parents with your children as you pray with them and as you read with them and as you talk to them.

It takes place when you go out with your friends socializing. It's the most beautiful thing to do, to tell the simple story of Jesus.

That's why we exist. That's why we're here. This is where the story is all heading towards. everyone must hear the gospel, but not all who hear the gospel will believe.

Look at verse 16 of Romans 10. But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message?

That little quote there comes straight after the announcement of the victory we just read about in Isaiah. The good news of liberation and redemption has been told, but you know what?

[23 : 20] They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to accept it. They were basically saying we don't want a saving king. We'll be our own king and live our own way and do our own thing. We can do life on our own, thanks very much.

And in the same way, many who hear about Jesus, they just simply don't want him. We don't need him. You don't really believe in him.

I can live without him. Verse 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

But I ask, did they not hear? Is the reason why people don't believe because they never heard? Well, look at the rest of verse 18.

Of course they did. Of course they heard. Their voice has gone out into all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world. They did hear the message, but they simply didn't believe it.

[24 : 22] And the sad reality is there are those that you know and who I know who have heard the story many, many times. But they still push Jesus away.

Maybe you have a friend and you've gently explained the gospel. Graciously, you've talked to them, but yet they remain hard and cynical.

Maybe there's somebody close within your family and you've prayed with them for many years, but as yet there doesn't seem to be any response. And the experience of life is so often that those who hear it seem to reject it the most.

So what are we to do? I don't kind of quite get it because we're telling us on one side everybody must hear the message, but now you're saying that those who do hear it don't want to believe it. So what's the point? It all seems a waste of time. Why don't we all just go home? What's the reason for all of this? Well, we must remember that we have a gracious and a patient God who does not give up on his people.

[25 : 46] We must patiently keep telling the gospel. Because if we do, if we keep telling the gospel, or as it is in chapter 10 verse 1, he says, my heart desire my prayer.

The reason we can keep on praying and keep telling the story of Jesus is these three things. First, God provokes some to jealousy.

Well, what's that about? Well, look at verse 19. Again, I ask, did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, I will make you envious by those who are not a nation.

I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding. What he's saying here is this, that those who hear the good news, but refuse to believe the good news, God's going to respond to them by taking it from them and giving it to somebody else.

God is going to take the good news, as it were, from those people and give it to another people. To make them, look at verse 19, I will make you envious, or I will make you jealous.

[27 : 16] The purpose is that those who have rejected the good news will look and see the transformation that the gospel has brought to somebody else's life and they will see what the gospel has done in their life, how it's changed them and transformed them and they'll say, I want that back.

I now see what it looks like and what it does and I want it. It's like giving a gift to one of your little children and you take that gift and you want your little child to enjoy it.

You want them to see the pleasure that it can give them. And you bring it into them and you place it before them but instead of them receiving and going, oh thank you, they throw a hissy fit and they throw it across the room.

And what does the parent do? Well they take that gift and they go to the child next door and they present it to the child and with a beaming face that little child looks up and receives it and they open it with full of joy and they delight in the gift because it's only then that your child will then see its true value and they'll say I want that back.

And that's what God will do. For those who have heard, other people will hear it and they will see the transformation and say I want it back. That's the way God works.

[28 : 47] God saves in surprising ways. Verse 20 And Isaiah boldly says I was found by those who did not seek me.

I was found by those who did not seek me. I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me. God in his grace will save those who we never ever thought possible.

The most surprising of ways, people who never went to church, people who never had the privilege of a Christian family, people who just showed no interest whatsoever, will hear and they will believe. And you might have that friend or there may be somebody within your family and you're just thinking right now, it's impossible for them to become a follower of Jesus. It's impossible for them to believe. They've always resisted it. They've always rejected it. But with God it's never impossible because I, he says, reveal myself to those who did not ask for me.

[30 : 01] People who never searched or even asked. God can do amazing things. So be encouraged that God's grace is not restricted. He can soften the most hardened atheist.

He can reach the most distant people group. He can change the heart of the most brutal dictator and he can touch your closest loved ones.

God saves in the most surprising of ways. And last, God will be graciously patient.

Look at verse 21. Concerning Israel, he says, all day long I have held out my hands. All day long I've held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.

You see, you and I might want to give up on people. Perhaps we have. We might think that all our prayers are useless, that talking is a waste of time, the energy, the investment, the love we give, and there doesn't seem to be a response, and we just want to give up, but not with God.

[31 : 22] Look what it says in verse 21. All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.

People may refuse me, he says, but I will never give up on them. I will forever hold out my hands, reaching out to them, longing that they will take my hands.

And God has been so graciously patient with you and me, and that is why we must be patiently telling the good news to other people.

people. This is the story. This is where it's all heading. One day people from every tribe and language and nation will be gathered together in the new heavens and the new earth where there will be no more suffering and no more pain.

And we are called today as a church and as a people to be on board that mission. And it requires us to invest our lives, our resources, our finances, all that we have into this mission of God.

[32 : 35] We want to finish this morning by showing a video. Rob, if you wouldn't mind just flicking it on there for us. And just watch and read the text as it comes up.

It's called Beautiful Feet. And let through these images and through these words remind ourselves again of the calling that we have.

Thanks, Rob. Thanks, Rob. Thanks, Rob. Thanks, Rob. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 38] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 08] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[39 : 38] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[42 : 08] Thank you.

Thank you.