

Hear, Believe, and Call on His Name

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[0:00] Ready? We will be in Romans 10 this morning, our New Testament reading.! It covers verses 9 to 17, but we will be focusing primarily on verses 14 and 15.

! So I want to encourage you to open your Bible. And I think it is in our pew Bible. It is on page 11. It is 11:24 in our pew Bible. So I want to encourage you to open so you can follow along. And before we go any further, let us pray. To God, to ready our hearts to hear His exhortations for us this morning.

Let us pray. Lord God, we acknowledge Your sovereignty in the world. We acknowledge that You are not only our Father, but You are King and You are Lord.

Lord of our lives. Lord, we also acknowledge that You are advancing Your kingdom. And Lord, I pray that as Your Word is being spoken to us this morning, give us ears to hear.

[1:15] Give us, Lord, to be emboldened. To be means by which Your kingdom advances in the world. Give us hearts to proclaim the goodness of Jesus Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So this Seventh Sunday Epiphany is also the Sunday the church observes as World Mission Sunday.

Now, mission has many different meanings in different circles. But for our purposes, I want us to understand, actually through this text, I want us to think specifically of missions in the context of proclaiming the gospel, that Jesus Christ is the righteous one of God revealed to mankind, so that all will believe in Him and call on His name from every nation, from every tribe or tongue will be saved.

So mission, by that definition, involves evangelism. Evangelism being the spreading of the gospel by public preaching and personal witness.

So in this passage in Romans, Paul has a series of progression of questions, especially in verse 14 and 15.

[2:44] And these questions, this progression of questions, helps us to see the ordinary way God has ordained for people to come to a saving knowledge of Him.

And when I say ordinary, it doesn't mean less significant or not important. By ordinary, we mean that this is the manner God has preordained for people to come to saving faith.

It is through the proclamation of His gospel. God has ordained it that way. So Paul in verse 14 and 15, he does something here. He breaks down this ordinary way in which people come to saving faith.

Now, these verses, they don't stand alone by themselves. It would be helpful for us to understand what Paul means in these verses best if we read it in the context of the preceding verses.

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

[3:59] In verse 10 he says, For with the heart, one believes and is justified, and with the mouth, one confesses and is saved. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Paul highlights the importance of an inward response to the gospel, that is, believing in our hearts. And then he also emphasized the importance of an outward reflection of this belief, by confessing with our mouth. And he says in verse 12, That the Lord bestows riches, That is, what he means by riches here is salvation.

God bestows riches, that is salvation, on all. All will call on Him. Because He is Lord of all. He's emphasizing here that Yahweh is not just the Lord of the Jews, the God of the Jews alone.

He is not a regional God. But He's the Lord of all the earth. And He is a just God. And He's just as He is gracious.

[5:13] So, His salvation is not reserved for anyone on the basis of ethnicity. Or upbringing. Rather, it is for all who call on Him.

Here plainly, spelled out for us, is the free offer of the gospel. The gospel is a compassionate invitation of God to us.

In the words of prophet Isaiah, it is for everyone who thirsts to come to the water. And he who has no money is invited to come to buy and to eat.

Without money and without price. It is free. And it's free not because it is not costly. In fact, the cost of the gospel is beyond any price we can pay.

But there is one who can pay and has paid the price so that we may come. And He is the one that extends the free invitation to come to Him.

[6:26] To receive. to be saved. Now, the manner in which we come is important as well. You see here that Paul asked these series of questions in verse 14 and 15.

He says, How then will they call on Him whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach? Unless they are sent. As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

So, they need to first call on the name of Christ. That's what Paul emphasizes in verse 13. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

There's a need to call. It's a necessity. It is only those who call on the name of Christ that are saved. Now, we are accustomed.

[7:34] We're accustomed to saying this, that if you believe in Jesus, you will be saved. And that is true. But remember what Paul is doing here is that he's breaking it all down to his bare essentials.

And he wants to distinguish for us between believing, the believing that leads to calling on his name and the believing that is just mere belief that does not call, that does not lead to calling on the name of God, on the name of Christ.

So, you might have heard it put this way. Saving faith requires not just hearing what I hear is the content of the message, but saving faith also requires agreeing to the message, to agreeing that the message that we're hearing is actually true.

But not only that, saving faith also requires entrusting your whole being to that message.

Now, without that last part, there is no saving faith. That is what Paul is emphasizing here. That's what it means to call on the name of God in order to be saved, is to entrust ourselves, you might say here, at this point, I go to church religiously.

[8:56] I believe the Bible. In fact, I've always been a Christian. I believe in all the things Christians are supposed to believe. But it is not enough to know God.

What you've just said is, I know God, I know His word, and I believe it. But that is not enough.

Because if that knowledge does not lead you to the realization that you are a sinner in great need of God's mercy, and that Jesus is the Messiah of God, through whom you can obtain redemption.

If all the knowledge you have does not lead you to that place of surrendering yourself to God, then you have not actually received salvation.

That's what Paul is breaking down so that we may see. calling on the name of God is essential to saving faith. It might be effort for us to look again at the context in which Paul asks these questions.

You see, the whole of chapter 9 and chapter 10 and chapter 11 in Romans is Paul exploring the problem of the Jewish people. The thing that is keeping them from accepting the gospel, the thing that is keeping them from accepting the gospel and trusting Jesus when they, the Jews of all people, they know the law, they've been given the law.

[10:26] He said early in Romans, Paul wrote early in Romans that the only way anyone can be righteous before God is by faith through Christ.

In chapter 3 verse 22, Paul writes this, the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ. to all who believe, since there is no distinction.

Paul is emphasizing, there's no distinction. Everyone who comes to God must come through Jesus Christ. He, Jesus, is the righteousness of God.

So the Jewish nation as a whole, they believed in God. They know God. They had the law. They are that religious person who attends church regularly, reads their Bible, believe in living a life set apart from the world.

But when God's righteousness appeared to them, when God's righteousness, Jesus Christ himself, appeared among them, they refused to believe in him. The one to whom the law was pointing all along.

[11:35] The Jews knew, they knew this, they knew they needed a savior. savior. The law even served its purpose in promoting in them the knowledge of sin.

But the law could not provide the way to righteousness. The law made them aware that they need a savior, made them realize they need God's peace and forgiveness for their sins.

But the law couldn't provide the way to righteousness. righteousness. But the law also promised though that there will be a messiah through whom righteousness and peace will reign.

The Jews were looking for this messiah, this promised one, through whom God's peace and righteousness will reign. But when he came, they didn't like the kind of messiah God sent.

They had in mind a messiah of their own fashioning. remember even his close disciples struggled initially with Jesus when Jesus told them the manner in which he was going to bring salvation.

[12:46] Perhaps that might be your story too. You know Jesus, you believe the Bible's testimony about him, you think your knowledge of God's law is enough.

Paul says to you in Romans, you must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Paul will know after all, he was unmatched in zeal for God.

He was unmatched in the knowledge of the law. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, he called himself. But he was resting on that knowledge for righteousness.

It wasn't until he entrusted himself to Christ Jesus that he was saved. The same goes for us and this is what Paul is trying to point out.

So let's look further at the progression that Paul is pointing out in these two verses. Calling on Christ is essential for saving faith. But then he asks, but how then will they call on him whom they have not believed?

[13:52] faith. Although intellectual assent to Christ is not enough. That's what we've said before. Just believing is not enough.

That doesn't mean that believing is not essential. It is essential. You must first believe in something before you can entrust yourself to that thing.

You must first believe in Jesus before you can then call on his name. You must first come to understand that you are a sinner. And Jesus is the one who can save you from your sins.

Now here we must be careful to note that what we mean by intellectual assent, that what intellectual might scare us, it doesn't mean that you have to be a theologian.

It doesn't mean that you have to know every intricacies of every doctrine. the knowledge that Paul is talking about here, the knowledge to which we must believe is encapsulated in these three points.

[15:01] And these three points is actually regarded from it's a question of catechizing children. It's from the catechism. How do we know our state before God? The first thing you need to know, this is the knowledge that is required for you to need in order to call on the name of Christ to be saved.

You must first know, number one, you must first know how great your sin and misery is. Second, you must know how you may be delivered from all your sins and miseries.

So you must first know your sin and your miseries and then you must know how you may be delivered from your sins and miseries. And three, you must now know how you can express your gratitude to God for saving you.

None of this includes a point by point knowledge of the doctrine of justification or some other, you know, those are things we ought to grow in as Christians.

We need to grow in our knowledge of God. Those are good pursuits. But you don't need to have all your ducks and your knowledge. You don't need to have a PhD in order to become a Christian.

[16:21] That's not what it's saying here. The knowledge that you need to know is just, I'm a sinner in need of saving, in need of salvation, in need of rescue.

Jesus is the one who can rescue and save me. And how am I now to live as one who's been rescued and saved? That's the knowledge. And upon knowing that, you can call.

So this is important. This is vitally important in our proclamation of the gospel. What we proclaim, what we proclaim is Christ, not ourselves, Paul writes to the Corinthians.

And here's an important practical advice that was given to me that I want to pass on to you. In proclaiming this Christ, it's helpful for us to work, each one of us.

If you're a Christian, if you've come to faith, you have a testimony. But work on that testimony. What I mean by work on that is practice being able to tell how you came to Christ.

[17 : 26] Tell of the great salvation that Christ has brought in your life to bring you. So work on your testimony and condense it to a three-minute conversation. Now this is what you want to say in that three-minute conversation.

You want to show how great a you are and how great a Savior God is. Your testimony is not about how great a person you are. It's about how great a person a Savior Jesus Christ is.

This is what it means to proclaim Christ and not ourselves. So Paul continues, how are they to believe?

how are they to believe? On him whom they have not heard. Or rather, I think this is a better reading of this, how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard?

I think Paul is saying here that they have to hear Christ himself in order to believe. Now this puts things in proper perspective for any pastor or for any missionary or any Christian who shares his or her faith.

[18 : 39] Jesus said this in Luke 10. This is when he sent out the 72 in twos to go and preach the gospel. He told them, he who listens to you listens to me.

He also said that his sheep hears his voice and follows him. He says that his sheep will never follow a stranger.

God is this is why what we proclaim, what people have to hear is not us but Christ himself in our proclamation.

This is why I pray earnestly that whenever anyone, either me or any other individual stands here to preach the gospel, what you will hear above the din of the speaker's voice, above the mannerisms of the speaker, above the accent of the speaker, is Jesus himself, the shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

And that as your pastor, I can, my prayer is that I can be a faithful under shepherd who faithfully serves in pointing you to Jesus. that is the task that we all have as well as ambassadors of Christ, as herald of this gospel, is that what does a herald do?

[20 : 09] What does an ambassador do? He points to the one who has given him the message. And so Paul is saying here, they must call, but how can they call unless they have believed?

And how can they believe unless they hear Christ in the message? And he goes on and says, upon believing the message and hearing him, now he has this next necessity of preaching Christ.

How are they to hear Christ without someone preaching? Now, these last two points, hearing Christ and preaching Christ, are closely knitted.

We need to hear Christ, but we can only hear Christ if Christ is preached. Our preaching is not subjective, brothers and sisters. Our proclamation of the gospel is not just telling about our feelings, about how we feel in a particular day.

It's not a list of present issues of the day. That's not what the gospel preaching is. Our preaching has to be the truth about Christ as revealed in the scripture.

[21 : 25] That is what preaching Christ is. This is most true. It's true of our own personal witness, but it's most true of public preaching.

and then he goes on. He says, how are they to preach unless they are sent?

See, all the parts have been broken apart at this point by Paul. And here's the final piece. for people to call on the name of Jesus, for them to believe, for them to hear Christ's voice, for Christ to be preached, people must be sent to do the work.

So far, I hope you've seen how I've been making analogies to personal evangelism. The reason why I'm making an analogy, I don't want you to see, oh well, he's just talking about himself or any pastor or the work of preaching the gospel.

This is for all of us Christians, right? It involves our own personal witness about Christ. But I think it is helpful here to see in this last point of being sent something that of the Lord's command to all of us in the Great Commission.

[22 : 47] But more importantly, I think it's helpful for us to see that Paul here is given a principle of how the church is to do evangelism and mission. Preachers of the gospel must be sent to do the work.

But who does the sending? Who does the sending? God himself sends. Matthew 9 tells us, He is the Lord of the harvest, and it is to him, it is to him we must pray to send workers into the field.

No one goes without being sent. At least when it comes to the work of God. A herald does not go and proclaim his own message.

Then he's not a herald. A herald proclaims the message of someone else, of the king. And if we're a herald, we have to be sent. And so here is the important part for us as the church collectively.

The whole point of these verses is that we cannot sit as the church of Christ. We can't sit on the sidelines. We must be involved in equipping and sending people into every mission fields where people need to hear about Jesus.

[24 : 12] And it is clear to me, and I hope to you as well, that in the 21st century world, there is no area on planet Earth where there isn't a need for laborers.

We need preachers of the gospel in Syracuse, New York, as much as was needed and is still needed in Syracuse, Greece. And in the globalized world, the world is coming to us, and we need to be aware of it.

Now, this is why I'm especially glad this morning that we'll be hearing for one of the missionaries that we support as a church, Jim Pitcher of Tapa. Now, Jim realizes that the world is coming to us.

So here in Syracuse, he's committed to ministering and preaching the gospel to Chinese college students in Syracuse. everyone at job is to realize, wherever you are, you're a missionary.

Now, there are people that are especially called by the church and sent to other areas in the world, to far-flung regions of the world. There are also others that are called and sent to the work of gospel ministry and vocation, but all of us are missionaries wherever we are because it's a mission field wherever we find ourselves.

[25 : 45] So, finally, a word of encouragement is that I think all of these can seem overwhelming. The need is great, we know, but we also know that we are so small for the task.

To preach, to tell people about Jesus seems sometimes like a daunting thing to do. for here what scripture says about those who proclaim the message of the gospel.

As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. Now, this doesn't mean that people who preach the good news particularly have beautiful smelly feet.

In fact, it probably means that they have smelly feet. Surely in that time, they've been traveling in dirt roads. That's not what, it's not talking, but their feet are beautiful because the news they proclaim is great, good news of salvation.

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. Now, it doesn't say, look in that statement, it doesn't say how beautiful are those who are greatly skilled at it.

[26 : 52] It doesn't say how beautiful are those who can command the attention of a stadium like a Billy Graham or Charles Spurgeon. That's not what it's saying.

It merely says how beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news. Any of us, as long as we're committed to proclaiming Christ, that is us.

That's who Paul is referring to. Speaking of Charles Spurgeon, that great 19th century preacher, now, as a 15 year old, Spurgeon was on his way.

we don't know where he was going. He was on his way somewhere else, but a snowstorm, very much like, probably more than this morning's, a blizzard made him turn into a small church for warmth.

And as God will have it, it was a Sunday morning. So, Charles Spurgeon turned into this small chapel of about 15 people. and as you have it, the pastor couldn't even make it that morning to church, because he was snowed in.

[28 : 05] And presumably, an elder of the church, Charles described him as probably a shoemaker or a tailor by trade, preached that morning.

Sort of, you know, just got thrown to the wolves, kind of, the pastor can't show up, so he got up and he preached on Isaiah 45, verse 22, which says, look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.

Now, as Spurgeon described it, he said, it wasn't a particularly riveting sermon. It was very simple, and after about 10 minutes, the man was searching for something to say.

But at a certain point, the man looks around as young Spurgeon sitting there, 15-year-old Spurgeon, and he says to him, young man, you look very miserable. And he continued, and you will always be miserable, miserable in life, and miserable in death, if you do not obey my text.

But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved. and Charles Spurgeon says, he shouted as only a primitive Methodist can, young man, look to Jesus Christ.

[29 : 30] Spurgeon described how it is as if the heavens were opened as he heard this word of this simple sermon, call to turn to Jesus Christ.

And upon hearing Christ preached, as simple as maybe suddenly as it was, he believed, and he entrusted himself to Jesus on that Sunday morning.

And as he tells his story years later, presumably, he doesn't even remember the name of the man. this man who God used as an instrument of the gospel to bring him to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Spurgeon will go on as a preacher of the gospel to lead thousands of people to Christ in gospel ministry. But this shoemaker was the man who led him to Christ.

I'm sure that man will be surprised when he got to get to heaven. And see that he is, it's through him that these thousands of souls have come to save in faith.

[30 : 52] He was not particularly eloquent, he was not particularly gifted as an orator, but he cared enough and he trusted in God's power despite his own weakness and his own limitations.

He trusted and he cared for lost souls enough to utter the name of Christ, to speak of Jesus to a lost soul. And that's how God advances his kingdom.

He is the one that saves, but he's ordained that he will use human instruments. and the human instruments he will use is his church in doing that work.

And so we call on people, we send people into the world, to the far corners, the far flung regions of the world to preach Christ, to hear about Christ.

We also send people and we equip them for the work. That is part of what it is to care for lost souls. That's the church of Christ.

[32 : 02] But we also preach the word of Christ to our neighbors, to our families, to our friends who do not know. We are also lost souls in our circles who desperately, just as much as those areas in the Middle East and in China and in Africa and in Europe need the gospel of Jesus Christ.

People in our vicinity also need it. But this is comforting. I want to leave with this encouraging note. It is not the eloquence of your message.

It is not how much you know about the Bible. It is that you trust the power of God to save and that God can use your faithful proclamation of Jesus.

No matter how little it is, no matter how simple it seems to turn people's heart and to bring them to saving faith. Do we trust that God can do that?

It is not about us. It is not about our power. But do we trust God? Do we trust his might to bring lost souls? Do you see your own life?

[33 : 20] How did you come to saving faith? God do you to to drew you to himself? that many of us can point to people in our lives. We are not Charles Spurgeons of the world or Billy Grahams of the world who have spoken to you, maybe your parents, maybe your friend, maybe your sibling, who have witnessed to you about Jesus Christ.

And it's true these men and women, just faithful Christians, by which God drew you to himself. Are we willing then also to be instruments of the gospel?

And if you are here, hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ, are you hearing Christ? Do you believe?

And if so, I invite you to call on the name of Christ.

It is a free offer. Call on him. He is ready to save. Let us pray. Lord, we pray that you will give us boldness, equip us, Lord, to be ministers, to be heralds of your gospel.

We also pray, Lord, that you will continue to use us to equip those who you've called to go out into the world to preach the gospel. Help us, Lord, to grow into a church that sends missionaries.

[34 : 48] Help us, Lord, to continue to be a church that supports your gospel ministry all over the world and even in our city. Help us, Lord, to be committed not only to ourselves, but also to the advancement of your kingdom in the world, in our world and in the world at large.

And we also know that none of this can be done without the Holy Spirit. So help us to trust your power to save and help us to entrust ourselves, the proclamation of the gospel and our whole self to you, that you will use us any way you see fit to bring people into your fold.

We pray this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.