

Romans 10:14-21
For the week of October 8, 2023

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

The preceding section ended with the strong biblical affirmation, “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (10:13)—and for Paul, of course, the Lord is Jesus Christ. This, however, only leads to other perplexing questions, and here Paul poses four of them (10:14–15), each one leading logically to the next:

- How can people call on the name of the Lord if they don't believe in him?
- How can people believe in him if they don't hear the message?
- How can people hear the message if someone doesn't tell them?
- How can anyone tell them if no one is called and commissioned to do so?

This leads Paul to ask whether it might be that the people of Israel have never really heard or understood the Good News (10:18–19) and therefore have never really had a chance to believe and be saved. No, Paul says, the reality is that many have simply chosen not to believe. Even Isaiah, in his time, was dismayed at how few people seemed to have ears to hear God's message (10:16; Isa 53:1). It is true that faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard when people preach about Christ (10:17). However, people *have* heard the message. Just as the Psalms speak of the way the skies proclaim the glory of God throughout the world, so we may speak, in a sense, of the worldwide proclamation of the Good News, the missionary witness of Christian evangelists everywhere—“to all the world” (10:18; cf. 1:19–20; Ps 19:4). This statement, of course, is not intended to be taken literally; what Paul means to say is that, like the skies' witness to God's glory, the Good News is spreading all around the world. By now the Good News has been heard throughout the northeastern Mediterranean area—that is the focus of Paul's thought here. The problem is not that people have not heard; the problem is that their disobedient and rebellious hearts have kept them from believing.¹

Observation (vs. 14-15)

3. What is Paul saying?

¹ Roger Mohrlang, Gerald L. Borchert, [*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 14: Romans and Galatians*](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 164–165.

Interpretation

4. How do the questions build upon one another?

5. What is the meaning of call, believe, hear, and preach?

6. In verse 15, why does Paul cite Isaiah 52:7? See also the Armor of God in Eph 6:10-20 and note verse 15.

Application

7. How does this speak to the necessity of evangelism in your life and sphere of influence?

Observation (vs. 16-17)

8. What is Paul saying to the church in Rome within these verses?

Interpretation

9. In verse 16, why does Paul cite Isaiah 53:1 (this is right in the middle of the messianic suffering prophecy 52:13-53:12)? See also John 12:36b-38.

Application

10. How do you obey the Gospel?

11. How do you stay in the Word to proclaim/live the Word?

Interpretation (vs. 18-19)

12. Paul cites Psalm 19:4 (see verses 1-6 for context) and Deut. 32:21. What is Paul saying?

Observation

13. Considering the argument of chapter 10 that the message of salvation is to all (not just the Jew) ...

a. How have the Jews heard the Gospel (vs. 18)?

b. What was the understanding of the Gospel (vs. 19)?

Application

14. How did you first hear the Gospel?

15. What is your understanding of the Gospel, and could it be explained to someone else? Why or why not?

Observation (vs.20-21)

Isaiah 65:1-2 (see verse 20)

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;

I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, "Here I am, here I am,"

to a nation that was not called by my name.

² **I spread out my hands all the day**

to a rebellious people,

who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;²

16. What is Paul saying from the verses in Isaiah?

Interpretation

17. How does verse 1 of Isaiah 65 speak about the nations outside of Israel?

18. How does verse 2 speak about the nation of Israel?

Application

19. With the gift of the Word in your hand, how do you try to prevent not being a **rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following "your" own devices?**

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 65:1–2.