

Title: God is the Great Missionary

Text: Romans 10:18-21

For those here that have walked with the Lord for a while and know the history of missions, who are some of the greatest missionaries?

Paul the Apostle, Adoniram Judson, William Carry, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, David Brainard, David Livingston, Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, Nate Saint. Etc

But do you know who the greatest missionary of all time is? God himself.

Sometimes we might get the impression that the great missionary endeavor rests squarely on our shoulders. But where did we get the idea of missions in the first place? God. God is the one most concerned about the lost. God is the one who desires to see people saved and secure in Him.

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

God is not happy when the unrepentant sinner dies without being saved.

Ezekiel 33:11 ESV

¹¹ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

God has always desired for the lost to turn to him. Those who are Jewish and those who are gentile. God desires for all people to be saved and is working to that end.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 ESV

³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God has been faithful in this missionary endeavor and will continue to be so. Both for the Jew and the Greek.

After all, this is why Christ came to this earth, right? To seek and to save that which is lost!

Our God is faithful to reach the lost!

Main Idea: God is Faithful in Sharing the Word About Christ. Are you?

Transition: After all, this is the most important activity that we can be involved in.

Luke 15:7 (ESV)

⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

And it is God who desires, more than anyone else, to see sinners rescued and brought into a right relationship with him.

And He desires to use you and me to accomplish this monumental endeavor.

That was the point of verses 14-17 that we covered two weeks ago. *“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.”*

What Paul wants us to see in verses 18-21 is His passion for the lost and what he has done over the centuries to reach those in need of salvation.

1. God is Faithful in Preaching His Gospel to The World (vs. 18)

Check out verse 18...

Romans 10:18 ESV

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

Paul leads with a question that harkens back to verses 14-17

Romans 10:14–17 ESV

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in 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? ¹⁵ 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!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Paul’s point then in verse 18 is they have indeed heard! Why have they heard? Because God is the great missionary. And in every generation since the fall of man God has pursued the lost for salvation. To prove his point, Paul quotes his first witness to answer his first question.

David’s Witness (one of three - why is this significant?)

Paul quotes [Psalm 19:4](#) which is a psalm of David.

Psalm 19:4 ESV

⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

Now to be clear, [Psalm 19:4](#) is speaking of General revelation that testifies to the fact that there is a Creator God.

Paul however quotes this verse with the idea of Special revelation in mind. Special revelation is the revelation that salvation is available through Jesus Christ.

Notice what verse four says, *“Their voice goes out through all the earth...”* whose voice? The voice of those inspired and invigorated by God to share the good news. Those that Paul refers to in verse 15 of this chapter...

Romans 10:15 ESV

15 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!"

Those with beautiful feet to use...

Romans 10:18 (ESV)

"Their voice (which) has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

Do you see what Paul is saying here? He is using the Psalm of David to show that the gospel has gone out to all the world, not just the Jews.

That God is communicating to all the world that he desires to redeem them from the eternal pit of destruction.

That is it God who is working through these beautiful feet who have gospel-saturated voices to reach the nations with the gospel.

And God will keep at it until the last saved gentile comes to faith in Christ.

Romans 11:25 ESV

25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

After the very last gentile becomes a follower of Christ, God will usher in the end of time as we know it.

And God is the one at the heart of the pursuit of those who need him. He is the one who cares about your eternal soul. He is the one that is working to save you.

If He were not intimately involved in this process, you and I would remain in our sin with no desire whatsoever to do anything about it!

Listen to John Stott's perspective of God's involvement in His salvation...

"Why I am a Christian is due ultimately neither to the influence of my parents and teachers, nor to my own personal decision for Christ, but to 'the Hound of Heaven (Francis Thompson).' That is, it is due to Jesus Christ himself, who pursued me relentlessly even when I was running away from him in order to go my own way. And if it were not for the gracious pursuit of the Hound of Heaven I would today be on the scrap-heap of wasted and discarded lives." - John Stott "Why I am a Christian"

God is more passionate about the lost than you are and He is chasing them as the one and only Hound of Heaven.

But here's the interesting point. You are one of the voices He speaks through. You are one with beautiful feet that he has sent out into the world to carry the good news of salvation through Christ. This beautiful salvation is available to those who repent and believe on Him. And you get to partner with the greatest missionary ever to get this crucial message out!

God's faithfulness is through all generations. He has and continues to get the salvation message out to all the earth. He doesn't need you, but man, He wants to use you!

What are you doing to work as the voice and feet of Christ to a world that desperately needs to hear the message about Christ?

How about this? Tomorrow morning in your Personal Worship Time, ask God to send someone your way to talk about Jesus with.

Then, as you go throughout your day, be open to Jesus' opportunities.

Take the opportunity when it arises. Don't shrink back!

Hebrews 10:36–39 ESV

³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Be bold! Don't shrink back!!

Review - God is Faithful in Sharing the Word About Christ. Are you?

God is Faithful in Preaching His Gospel to The World

2. God is Faithful in Teaching His Word to His People (vs. 19-20)

What do I mean by this? God did not hide his intentions regarding the salvation of the gentiles from the Jews. Their rescue from eternal condemnation has always been a part of His plan, and they knew it!

Check out the text and please notice the two other witnesses as I read.

Romans 10:19–20 ESV

¹⁹ But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." ²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

So, after reading this can you see that Paul says clearly that they did understand – at least they should have understood.

Why? Because of two more of their heroes who testified to this reality.

Let's take a closer look at the witnesses...

Moses' witness - Cited from [Deuteronomy 32:21](#) where Moses quotes God's goal to use his pursuit of the gentiles as a means for causing anger and jealousy in the Jewish people. That is what he means when he calls them "*those who are not a nation*" and "*foolish nation.*" Foolish

meaning uninformed or ignorant regarding the things of God and therefore foolish in comparison to God.

Paul uses this passage to prove all the way back in the Pentateuch, God had his sights on those outside of Judaism as well.

Isaiah's witness - Cited from [Isaiah 65:1](#) The great prophet makes a very interesting statement *"I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."* What this means is, God purposely turned to a people that were not actively seeking Him. This sounds like what He says in [Romans 3:10-11](#) (quote from [Psalm 14:1-3](#))

Romans 3:10–11 ESV

¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.

*God deliberately reverses the roles between himself and the Gentiles. It would normally be for them to ask, seek and knock (as Jesus was later to put it), and to adopt towards him the respectful attitude of a servant at his master's disposal, saying, 'Here I am.' Instead, although they did not ask or seek or offer themselves to his service, he allowed himself to be found by them, he revealed himself to them, and he even offered himself to them, saying humbly to them, 'Here am I.' This is dramatic imagery for grace, God taking the initiative to make himself known. **The Message of Romans 4. The Reason for Israel's Unbelief (16–21) – Stott***

Again, Paul uses this passage to prove that he has been teaching the same material for a very long time!

The point? And I do not want you to miss the beautiful literary technique Paul uses in this passage...

God, from the time of Moses, taught His people about his desire to reach the gentiles.

- Moses represents the Law.
- Isaiah represents the Prophets.
- And David represents the writings.

They represent the entirety of what we call the Old Testament.

Think about this! Paul makes a very clear point that the Jewish people have always been taught that the gospel goes to all nations and it has always been part of his plan.

And you know what? They missed it.

I got a ticket because I was speeding. I didn't know the speed limit. But I learned the hard way that I couldn't plead ignorance.

Ladies and gentlemen who are Christians here this morning. You must know the word that you have been taught.

This is Paul's point to Timothy...

2 Timothy 3:14–15 ESV

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Jews were properly instructed through the Law, Prophets, and Writings.

But they missed it! Or worse yet, ignored it!

What are we, the religious of this generation missing?

I have not always been a born-again-believing Baptist.

I have fresh eyes on our faith tradition and denomination.

I think we are really good at the truth of God.

I think we are not really good at the love of the lost.

I think we wish the world around us were moral regardless of if they were saved or not. If they were moral, then I as a Christian could be comfortable.

What would you prefer? To live in a moral community of lost people who don't make you uncomfortable or in a community of messy lost people, who make you very uncomfortable and who need Christ?

Jesus had a similar choice. He could have stayed in heaven and let us all die and go to hell. He didn't however. In His holiness, He came to earth to live among the wicked to save them. He came to seek and to save that which is lost.

Jesus tells us to go and do likewise.

Jesus didn't come to this earth and die on the cross so you could have a moral neighborhood. Jesus died on the cross to save people from their sins and provide for their eternal life in heaven.

How do we apply this? Very simple. Don't live your life like a practical atheist. Instead, know the teachings of the Bible and live them out.

The Jews were known for their knowledge of the Scriptures, yet they missed or ignored the most important part of the message, God's desire to save all nations.

Do you know the message and what God's expectation of you regarding the message?

Review - God is Faithful in sharing the Word About Christ. Are you?

God is Faithful in Preaching His Gospel to The World

God is Faithful in Teaching His Word to His People

3. God is Faithful in Reaching Out to Those Who Reject Him (vs. 21)

Explanation - There is something you need to know about God. There is a characteristic you need to understand about our Creator. He is amazingly patient.

Romans 10:21 ESV

²¹ But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

Do you see the point here? We see God's patient hand, and we see a chosen people that disregard what God says and proceed to act in a way that is opposite of his will and ways.

Now, if I were God, and the people that I specifically and specially chose to be my people were consistently disobedient and contrary to me, I would eventually run out of patience and leave them to their own devices. I would let them go to hell.

But again, Paul quotes the prophet, Isaiah. This time he quotes [Isaiah 65:2](#)

Isaiah 65:2 ESV

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;

*This quotation is from Isaiah 65:2. "All day long" certainly refers to this present "day of salvation" or day of grace in which we live. While Israel as a nation has been set aside, individual Jewish people can be saved and are being saved. The phrase "all day long" makes us think of Paul's ministry to the Jews in Rome when he arrived there as a prisoner. "From morning till evening" Paul expounded the Scriptures to them and sought to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 28:23). Through Paul, God was stretching out His arms of love to His disobedient people, yearning over them, and asking them to return. God's favor to the Gentiles did not change His love for the Jews. **The Bible Exposition Commentary Chapter Nine: The Wrong Righteousness (Romans 10) - Stott***

Do you see why I titled this sermon **"God is the Great Missionary?"**

God loves all people and desires for them to be saved. Yet, I don't believe God overrides the will of the individual. By His grace, He gives them an opportunity to choose for or against him.

Still, he waits patiently as he pursues everyone with the gospel. And He delights in using you in this process.

*God wants to use us to share the Gospel with both Jews and Gentiles. God can use our feet and our arms just as He used Paul's. Jesus Christ wept over Jerusalem and longed to gather His people in His arms! Instead, those arms were stretched out on a cross where He willingly died for Jews and Gentiles alike. God is long-suffering and patient "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). **The Bible Exposition Commentary Chapter Nine: The Wrong Righteousness (Romans 10) – Stott***

This is the picture of the prodigal son found in Luke 15:11-32. God the father waits patiently for the return of his son.

God is patiently waiting for you to come home...

Are you rejecting God? Man, give it up! Turn to Him! He is patiently waiting for you to give up your prideful ways and live for him. Won't you?

By the way, this goes for the Christian as well. Are you living as a practical atheist? Giving lip service to God but living as if you are God?

Hear the warning of Jesus...

Matthew 15:8-14 (ESV)

⁸ "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." ¹⁰ And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." ¹² Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" ¹³ He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

Christian, is this you? Do you honor the Lord with your lips, yet your heart is far from him? Do you want the Lord to say of you, "Let them alone; they are blind guides"?

God is incredibly patient both with the Jews and the Gentiles. He is amazingly longsuffering with the believing and the unbelieving. With you and with me.

"All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

I'm not sure of your spiritual condition, but my God is holding out His hands to you. Will you choose to shed your disobedience and contrary attitude and run to Him?

Conclusion

Review - God is Faithful in sharing the Word About Christ. Are you?

God is Faithful in Preaching His Gospel to The World

God is Faithful in Teaching His Word to His People

God is Faithful in Reaching Out to Those Who Reject Him

"God is a God of motion, of movement, and of mission... Mission is not an activity of the church but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God, Jesus is a missionary Messiah, and the Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Missions is the family business." – Leonard Sweet

God is the great missionary. And he uses the beautiful feet and voice of those who love Him and desire to serve Him.

Action – two things for you to do in light of this passage.

1. Appreciate that God pursues people with the gospel – Hound of Heaven
2. Partner with the greatest missionary of all time. If He pursues the lost with the hope of the gospel, we as his children must as well.

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. How does the idea that God is the greatest missionary impact you regarding missions?
2. God is faithful in sharing the word about Christ. Does this encourage you? If so how?
3. We have been taught by God in his word. What do we tend to forget or ignore?
4. Before studying this passage, what was your impression of God regarding the lost and religious? How do you see him now in light of verse 21?
5. What is one action step you can take this week?