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**Series: Romans: The Just Shall Live by Faith**  
**Message: We're All Missionaries**

**Transcribed Message**  
**February 20, 2022**  
**Romans 10:14-17**

I think if you were to ask any pastor who has been in the ministry for any length of time, what is it that keeps you going? What is it that encourages you and keeps you going in the midst of the challenges and discouragements that are part of life and ministry? I have a feeling that a large majority of those pastors would say it is the opportunity that comes their way to see the Word of God impact people's lives in such a way that there's transformation and change. The amazing opportunity to sit across from someone in a conversation and to share the glory of the gospel, to share the impactful power of the truth of God's Word, and to watch the Holy Spirit work in their heart and in their life and in their mind to where their eyes are opened to that truth, and they welcome it, and they receive it, and they take another step in the transformation of their walk with God, or of perhaps a totally new relationship with God. I have a feeling that if we were to ask the apostle Paul a question like that, I think he might say something very similar to that himself.

We come this morning to Romans chapter 10 and verses 14 to 17, and it seems to me in these verses we have one of the clearest passages on how it is that the gospel comes to us, how it is that the gospel is delivered. I want to suggest to you that there is nothing more incredible, there is nothing more amazing than being part of God's supernatural work of sharing the gospel that leads to eternal life. Let's start with a very quick review of the context of where we find ourselves in Romans 10. I would simply begin by saying the gospel is the greatest message. Period. Full stop. Just ask the apostle Paul. That's what he would say. I think he would say it is central to everything. The gospel is the central message to everything. The very first chapter in the 16<sup>th</sup> verse, our theme verse – for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Why aren't you ashamed of the gospel of Christ, Paul? Because it is the power of God alone unto salvation. It is the only thing that can interrupt somebody's life and literally turn them in

the opposite direction. That's why when Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11, he rehearses all of the things that he has endured. You know that list. Imprisonment, beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, persecutions of every manner. He says at the end of that list that he has endured it all for the sake of the gospel. Paul definitely thought it was the greatest message. He thought it was the center of everything.

Because of that, we are to be a gospel-centered church. We are to have gospel-centered marriages. We're to be gospel-centered families. We're to live gospel-centered lives. What does that mean? It means every day we remind ourselves that if it were not for the gospel, of the grace of God, our life would be totally different. It is simply to remind yourself every day of the glory of this grace that has broken into our life. That's what it means to live in the light of the gospel. We desperately desire to be a gospel-centered church, have gospel-centered families, have gospel-centered marriages, and live gospel-centered lives because it truly is life-changing.

Secondly, as we're going to see in these verses this morning, this is our assignment. This is our assignment. This is what we have been given as a church. We're going to look at that.

The other thing I want you to see is the gospel is what Paul preached to the Jew first. It was the gospel that Paul preached to the Jew first. That gives us the context of Romans 9:10, 11. The context of Romans 9:10, 11, if you're going to understand what's going on in these verses, has to begin with the understanding that what Paul is grappling with in these chapters is the unbelief of his people. How is it that the people of God, having been called and chosen by God to be a light to the nations, how is it that the vast majority having heard this gospel have rejected it? That's what he is walking us through in these chapters, this matter of unbelief.

His main point that he's making time after time in these chapters is that Israel's unbelief does not mean that God has rejected His people. It does not mean that the Word of God is not to be believed or that in some way God is not being faithful to what He promised. He is in these verses establishing the fact that they have everything that they need. Remember he said at the beginning, the Word is very near. It's right there. The gospel is there for them to embrace and to believe.

But rather than believing the gospel of the grace of God, in that sobering verse 3, he says but they've decided that their own righteousness is better than the righteousness of God. So, they remain in unbelief. In these verses this morning, 14 to 17, we come to what I'm simply calling another chain. It is not a golden chain. That we reserve for Romans 8. The very last verse of that chapter when Paul talked about those who God has predestined He's called. Those He has called, He's justified. Those He has justified, He has glorified. That was a golden chain. This is another chain. This chain might very well be the chain of the theology of evangelism because he brings all of these things together.

Last week, we looked at what is the message. What is the gospel? That was last week. We answered that in 12 words. We said the gospel is believe that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. You could maybe condense that and make it even 10 or 8 words. But the gist of it is believe. Believe that Jesus, being the Son of God, died on the cross for our sins and He was raised again. This message this morning in these verses is how is that going to be delivered? How does that message get out there? Paul walks us through this.

I love the providence of God. I love the doctrine of the providence of God which reassures me every day that there is a loving, caring, sovereign God who is guiding and directing all of the affairs of my life, and all of the affairs of your life, and all of the affairs of our world. He is intimately involved. He is guiding us every step of the way. I believe so strongly in the providence of God, I think in the providence of God this is a great time for us to be stepping into these verses this morning. We've got over 50 people coming every Monday night from 10 different countries of the world and we're having a chance to build a relationship into their life as we go through these ELL and citizenship classes. We don't yet know what all God's going to do with that, but we're making ourselves available to Him to do that. We're stepping into the lives of our Afghan families and having an opportunity to minister to them and praying and trusting that God is going to build these relationships in such a way that at some point the gospel is going to be shared and they will believe. We have our relationship that is ongoing with the Yukon public school. Some of you go into the schools and you mentor students. We have all of our community partners in which we're stepping into places where there are

underserved people and children and families and single moms. Our Reach ministry to the apartments. Spring is here and we're all going to be outside more. We're going to have a greater opportunity to connect with our neighbors and to have interchanges with them that we don't yet know what God might do in that regard. All of these things. How does God want to include you in how this gospel goes out to the world?

Let's look at that. This missionary enterprise that God has called us to is laid out for us here. I want to do something a little bit different this morning to start off. We're going to begin by looking at the "how". Verse 13 says to us: For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. We're going to now step into the question how is that going to happen? Paul tells us. There are two columns on your outline. There are going to be five words on either side. They're going to in some way obviously reflect each other as you'll see. The one I've simply called Paul's order and the other I've simply called the logical order. Really, Paul's order is reversed and the logical order is the order in which we think these things normally happen. I'd like to just walk through each of these verbs and just make some comments on each word and then we'll jump into the verses after we do that and look at them.

We start off with the very first word. The call. To call out to God as we see in verse 13 – for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved – to call is an expression of faith. It is an expression of confidence. You call on the Lord for help. You call on the Lord for deliverance. It's very much like that story that you've all heard 100 times about the guy that falls off the cliff. On the way down, he grabs the only branch on the side of the cliff. He is holding on for dear life. There's a 50-foot fall with death for certain right below him. He calls out for somebody to help him and nobody answers. Finally, a voice calls out and says this is the Lord. The man says praise God! God, I am I'm hanging on for dear life. Please help me. The Lord says let go of the branch ... and the guy says is there anybody else up there? Who wants to let go of the branch?!

That is really Hebrews 10:3. The Jewish people don't want to let go of the branch of their own self-righteousness. When people hear the gospel it's offensive. They don't want to believe that they can't contribute something to it. But Paul is saying to us here, when you call on the Lord it is an expression of confidence in God, that He alone is the one who will help you. in the Psalms we see this so often. Psalm 18 verse 3: "I call

upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies.” Psalm 145 verse 18: “The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.” The first thing for how this message goes out is there is a call that goes out, a call that is a call of confidence.

You call out because secondly, you believe. You call out because you believe. It takes us back to the previous section. When you look at that previous section 3 times Paul talks about believing, believing, believing. It's the key, isn't it? The question is what are we supposed to believe? The answer is Acts 16:31. The Philippian jailer asked that direct question to Paul. What must I do in order to be saved? Paul said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. In this context of Romans 10, Paul is very direct. He says we have to confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. He is telling us what it is that we need to believe. We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He is not just a good example of a good man who lived a good, moral life. He's the Son of God Himself. We have to believe that. We have to have confidence that that is what Jesus has said about Himself is true. We have to believe, Paul says, that He died and that He was raised again, that He died for our sins. The truth of the resurrection is the validation, the affirmation that Jesus is who He said He was. Remember when Paul spoke of this in 1Corinthians 15 and he said at verse 3: “For I delivered to you as of first importance...” This is the most important thing, he says. This is priority one. “...what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” We call because we believe.

We believe thirdly because we hear. We hear. To believe requires that we hear. This is not just hearing with our physical ears. It is not limited to that. This word encompasses the idea of understanding. You hear and you understand. this is simply the practical reality of the witness of the gospel. It's what we read in Acts 4:12 – “There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved.” You have to hear about the name of Jesus. You have to hear the gospel. You have to understand that what Jesus did He did for you. you call because you believe. You believe because you hear. You hear with understanding. That's why Jesus said to go to Jerusalem, to go to Judea, to go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

I looked up this week in a missiology blog. There are 17,446 unique people groups in the world. 17,446 who have a unique language and unique culture, live in a unique place. The world population is estimated to be about 7.9 billion people in 2022. Of those 17,446, there are 7,400 unreached people groups. 3 billion people. A little over 41%. A little over 41% of the world's population fall into this category of an unreached people group. That number should sober us. That number should cause us to think what is it that God has for me in this missionary enterprise.

He tells us the next word is to preach. To preach. It's not enough to go. You have to say something. It's not enough to go. You have to give the gospel. I've told the story before. Some of you remember. I had a plaque on my wall in the office. It said to preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary. If one of you gave that to me, I apologize because I took it down many years ago. I don't think you did. Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary. It's not true. It shouldn't be on anybody's wall because words are absolutely necessary. They're not optional. There has to be words for the gospel to be called on, for the gospel to be believed, for the gospel to be heard. Somebody has to say it. It has to be spoken. It has to be written. It has to be proclaimed. It has to be preached. There has to be words. The gospel has to be proclaimed. Good works can gain a hearing but good news is required to be preached.

I read in light of that this week an excellent article called "The Necessity and the Danger of Mercy Ministries." Mercy ministries are those ministries that are targeting needy situations, needy people. Often, they are driven by doing good works for people. This is a part of a book coming out called *The Church in Hard Places*, but they're just reminding us if we need mercy ministries. Absolutely, we need mercy ministries. There's a lot of hurting people in our world that need the touch of the love of Christ. But they do it every day and they're warning the church, it is not enough just to do good deeds for people. They have to hear the gospel. The gospel has to be woven in everything that we do in these acts of mercy. It is absolutely essential that we preach the good news.

The last word is the word "send". *Apostelo*. It's the word from which we get the word "apostle". It is sent ones. When Jesus sent out the disciples in Luke 10: "After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of Him two by two into every town and place where He Himself was about to go. And He said to them, 'The harvest is

plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way. Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” There it is. You can't meet every week in your fishing club and never go fishing. You've got to go fishing because we are sent ones. That's who we are. If you put that in its logical order and that's the right column. The logical order is you send, you preach, you hear, you believe, you call. Paul does the reverse as he gives us these words.

Here's what I want to do. Let's jump into these verses. We're going to begin by looking first of all at the “who” in verses 14 and 15. “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they going 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!’”

I look at these verses and it seems to me there are three parties involved in this discussion. The first that we look at we're going to call “they”. They. In verse 14, five times Paul talks about “they”. Then drop down to verse 16 ... but they. In the context of Romans 10, I ask you, who are the “they”? The “they” are the “them” of verse 1. The “them” of verse 1 are the “they” of verse 14 and the “they” of verse 16. Now who's on first? It's the fellow Jews. When Paul starts off this 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, my heart is breaking for them, my fellow Jews, for whom the gospel is so close, but for many they are rejecting it. And then he comes into these verses and it is they, they, they, they. He's talking about his fellow Jews.

For us this morning, in the context that's what we acknowledge. But we broaden that application. The “they” in this context, the wider application is for us today anyone who has not yet trusted Christ as their Savior. It is any pre-Christian that is in our life. Family members who are in your circle who have not yet trusted Christ, they're a part of this “they”. People that you work with. If I asked for a show of hands, how many of you work with people who have not yet trusted Christ, probably the majority of hands would go up in this place. You're in a context where you're rubbing shoulders all the time with “they”. These who have not yet believed. It's people that you go to school with. It's

people at the gym. It's your neighbors. Everybody, anybody that God brings into our life who has not yet trusted Christ. That's who he is talking about.

The second group are the messengers. What would you notice about the messengers? They have beautiful feet. Messengers have beautiful feet. People with beautiful feet. In verse 14, Paul talks about preaching. In verse 15, he talked about preaching two times. You say oh good, there for a minute I thought you were talking about me. You're the preacher, so really all of this is about you. No, that's not the application that we want to draw. You and I are both the preachers. The word "preacher" here is the word *kerusso*. It simply means to proclaim. It means to announce. It's not a noun, so it's not talking about a person. It is a participle, so it's talking about the action that is in view here.

If we lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> century or even if we lived in the Old Testament times and we read this, we would know exactly what Paul was talking about. It would be very common for a preacher, a messenger, an announcer, a proclaimer to be bringing a message to the public square. Remember in the book of Esther you had the messengers that would literally run through the Persian Empire with a message from the king announcing the news both good and bad that went into that story. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, that's how the word got out. The king would send out preachers, proclaimers, announcers, messengers. It's all of us who are involved in this. We don't bring our own message. We're bringing a message from somebody else. In this case, of course, it is a message from God and we're to tell everyone.

Look at that 15<sup>th</sup> verse. We're all messengers. We're all preachers. We're all announcers. We're all in this together. "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!'" How beautiful. That actually is a demonstrative expression that could just as easily be translated O, how beautiful! That is the idea behind the opening expression. O, how beautiful are the feet of the messenger. How descriptive this is. It's a quote that he takes from Isaiah 52 and verse 7 where the announcement is coming about the restoration of Jerusalem and O, how good news that is! O, how blessed it is to hear the proclaimer that Jerusalem, in the plan of God, is going to be restored one day.

When you think about the fact that that the Spirit of God instructs Paul to write about the beautiful feet of the messenger, it's an interesting imagery. I'm not going to ask you to put your hand up, but if I were to ask how many of you have beautiful feet, I don't know, maybe a lot of you would put your hand up. Most of us I think probably have shoes on this morning. That's generally the way we operate unless we're in a setting where it's appropriate to go barefoot or have sandals or whatever. Most of the time we have shoes on. There's a reason for that. It's not just comfort, but we'll leave it there. What does this imagery teach us about the messenger having beautiful feet?

The first thing of course is that God uses people. God uses people. That's the point that we see. When you read the book of Acts, which is the letter that follows the Gospels, Jesus at the end of the gospels says go. Then you jump into the book of Acts and it's a book about going. Have you ever thought about in your reading of the book of Acts that there is not one recorded instance where someone hears the gospel in any other way than from a person? They hear the gospel because there's a personal contact. It is fascinating. In Acts 10, Cornelius, a Gentile, a seeker of God because the Spirit of God is at work in his heart, an angel comes to him. The angel does not share the gospel with him. The angel says go get Peter and bring him here because he's got a word for you. very instructive. Angels do not preach the gospel in Scripture. They're messengers, but they're not messengers of the gospel. God could've used angels to do this work. Think of all the ways that God could have communicated the gospel to us. it's limitless as our creative juices would allow. What did God do? He chose us as ministers of reconciliation. He entrusted to us this gospel.

Why feet? The imagery here. Why not a mouth? Why not lips? Why not a voice? A radio voice to share the gospel. It's feet. Don't you think God wants to say first of all that it is a picture of going. Our feet are generally what take us places. We're going. Step back in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Feet were dirty. They were dusty. Feet were smelly. That was the impact of John 13 and Jesus washing the disciples' feet. The imagery for these people as they hear this quote from Isaiah – how beautiful are the feet!

I think it perhaps is also God saying I can use anybody. I use everybody who's available. It's not just attractive people. It's not just this category of person. No, anybody

who's available I use. Someone said that in heaven there will be a beauty contest of feet. Feet that have brought the gospel.

The third party in this story is God. Verse 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!'" there's somebody that is sent and then there's a sender. The sender we know is God. Paul says in Romans 1 verse 1, it doesn't say I'm sent. But he says I'm set apart in order that I will be sent. He says in Galatians chapter 1 verse 15 that he was set apart from before he was born. We have this imagery. In Acts 13, we won't go there but you can write it down. The Holy Spirit of God compels the leadership of the church in Antioch to send out Paul and Barnabas. God sent them and the church sent them. There's a sender and the sender is God.

Now. We've got the "they" pre-Christians who need to hear the gospel. You've got us. We're the sent, the proclaimers, the announcers, the preachers. And then you've got God who has sent us. Now it would be nice if the chapter section just ended right here. It would be a great wrap-up that we can bring, but look at what he goes on to say in verses 16 and 17, especially the sharp contrast of verse 16, because now he tells us the "what". He begins with a very strong adversative. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?'" He is going to tell us that there are two different ways that people respond to the preacher and to the message.

The first is there is disobedience. There is disobedience. You may remember a couple of weeks ago when we talked about the gospel being more than simply an invitation to listen. Very often, it's easy for us to think that because we talk about an invitation, the gospel invitation. And in a sense, that is true. There is the gospel invitation. But the gospel, as we said then, is much more than an invitation. The gospel is a command. The gospel requires a response. The gospel is far more than an invitation. It is to be obeyed. The gospel is to be believed. The gospel is to be trusted. The gospel causes you and calls you to turn from and to turn to. To not believe is to rebel. In Romans 10 verse 16, this picture is not unlike Romans 1 when God says the heavens are speaking every day about who I am, and the sinful heart of man looks at it and rejects it every day and exchanges the glory of God for the glory of a little god. That

is exactly what Paul is talking about here. They reject the gospel. They suppress it. They substitute their own.

This quote is an inference taken from Isaiah 6. When the question was asked of the prophet Isaiah, who will go? Who will be sent? Isaiah says here am I, God. Send me. God reminds Isaiah as he answers that call: Isaiah, you have answered the call. You're willing to go. But I just want to remind you of this. There are going to be a lot of people who do not listen to you. there are going to be a lot of people who pay no attention to your announcement. There are going to be a lot of people who are not going to believe what you have to say. Even back in Isaiah, God gives us this picture. What does the Old Testament speak of? Prophet after prophet. Stoned, rejected, killed. They did the same to Jesus. They did the same to the apostles.

Let me make this observation. A lack of response and failure in evangelism are not the same thing. A lack of response and failure in evangelism are not one and the same thing. You and I are called to be evangelists. We're called to be messengers. We're called to be proclaimers. The fact that there are varying responses to the message is something that the Bible tells us before we ever go out. Jesus, in the story of the parables and the different soils, pictured for us that there are varying responses to the gospel. Sometimes you share and the soil is hard as a rock. Sometimes you share and the soil has been turned by the Spirit of God. The seed is welcomed and it is received. I think what Paul is saying to us here is a lack of response and failure in evangelism are not one and the same. I like what Larry Moyer says: "My job is not to bring my family and friends to Christ. I can't do that. What I can do is bring Christ to my family and friends." That's what we do. God does the rest.

Now look. The second response. There is faith. There is disobedience or there is faith. Verse 17. One of the great verses in Romans. "So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ." The gospel. The good news is this life-giving Word. What's the very first word of verse 17? It's the word "so". He's summarizing everything that he has said to this point, especially in verses 14,15, and 16. Here is a summary statement. What is it that people need to hear? They need to hear the Word of Christ. Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ. In the larger context, the Word of Christ is the gospel. They need to hear the gospel.

In this unique expression that Paul uses here, it can be understood in one of two ways. The Word of Christ could be understood as what's called an objective genitive. A word about Christ. The gospel is a word about Christ. He is the Son of God. He died. He rose again. Believe on Him and have eternal life. It could also be understood as a subjective. It's Christ being pictured as He is speaking into our heart and into our life. I don't know why we have to pick one or the other. I think it's both. It's a Word about Christ. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by listening as Christ speaks this life-giving word into our heart. The reason is because this Word is so powerful. The reason is that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

You want to grow in your faith? You grow in your faith by hearing the Word of God. You want to step into a new relationship with Christ, to have your sins forgiven, to receive the gift of eternal life? Then you respond and you do so by faith in this life-giving word. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. One writer put it this way: "What faith really is in Biblical language is receiving the testimony of God. It is the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That and that alone is saving faith." My friend, there's nothing more incredible in this life than sitting across from somebody and sharing with them the life-changing, destiny-changing message of the gospel.

What do we take away? The gospel, my friend, is worth proclaiming no matter what the response. Let's just share the gospel. I say to you this morning, church, let's be a praying church. For Jesus said pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out proclaimers into the harvest. We must be a praying church. Let's be a sending church. Let's be a going church. Let's be a telling church, a proclaiming church.

What we tell and what we proclaim is what I say to you this morning. If you're not absolutely certain this morning that if you were to die before this service is over that you would go to heaven, God has good news for you. He wants you to absolutely know that question with certainty. It isn't about anything that you can do. It isn't about anything that you've done, either good or bad, that will keep you from heaven or get you there. It's about hearing and believing and calling out to God because His Son Jesus came to this earth. He died on the cross for your sins and mine. He was buried and rose again. If you believe that for yourself this morning, you're going to live forever.

Let's pray. Father, it's hard for us to even grasp the amazing nature of Your love and grace and mercy. Father, not only the fact that You have given it to us, but the fact that You've invited us into this process by which we share this with other people that You bring into our life. Help us to see today and every day this week the pre-Christians that You have brought into our life that day, and ask and trust that You will give us an opportunity to build a bridge into their life that will enable us to share with them the gospel of Your grace. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.