



In Romans chapter 9 we began to look at predestination and Israel's national disbelief. You may think it sounds repetitive, but Paul now takes the same topic and explores it from a different angle. We focused more on the divine side of Israel's unbelief in chapter 9, but now Paul changes direction and talks about the human side. Israel's rejection of God really matters to Paul. He loved his people and seems to be distraught over their rebellious choice. These are his brothers whom he loves. It's more than just an intellectual issue, it's emotional as well. We learned last week that many people of Israel were lost because they had deliberately chosen to pursue their own righteousness rather than trust in Christ.

I pray that as we study this chapter, our understanding of these issues deepens and our faith in Christ grows stronger. They are hard to grasp at times. We can't imagine anyone going to hell so we wrestle with that truth. But as David Shepherd points out, "Israel's refusal to believe in Christ was the reason for their rejection. Jesus was the stumbling block over whom they had tripped and fallen. Righteousness comes by faith and faith alone." I'm going to give you a short summary by Shepherd as well, to help us understand this chapter. He wrote, "Israel's rejection had nothing to do with lack of opportunity or inability to understand. It rested solely upon the nations' willful disobedience. They insisted on personal merit based on works as the way to gain God's approval. They had been equipped to understand that God's requirement for righteousness is faith."

1. Read Romans 10:1-21. Please list any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts. Also write any questions you have after reading it through.
2. How would you summarize this chapter in a few sentences?

2. Let's focus on verses 1-4 for now. Was the Israelites' zeal based on the right thing? Instead of drawing them to Christ, what did it do?

3. Why is zeal not enough? What are some present-day examples of people practicing “zeal without knowledge”?
4. Tim Keller says “zeal without knowledge” can lead to fanaticism. What does he mean?
5. Keller also says it’s a complete contradiction of a common proverb of our time: “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.” Why is this thought so dangerous, as well as contradictory to the Word of God?
6. We see clearly that Israel wasn’t ignorant due to a lack of information, but because they preferred to do it their way rather than submit to God. I must ask ... are you refusing to “stay ignorant” in some doctrine or truth because you’d just rather not believe it, or you may have to alter your behavior in some way? Spend some time praying about this ...
7. In verse 4, Paul says Christ is the “end of the law” for righteousness to everyone who believes. What do you think that means? Why does it almost sound startling?

3. What must we do to be saved, according to verses 9-13? Are there two separate actions? Write your thoughts.

Verse 10 restates the truth of verse 9. But it also shows us that believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth are not really separate actions – they are two sides of the same coin of faith. John Stott wrote, “The parallelism is reminiscent of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament, and the two clauses ... are to be held together rather than separately. Thus, there is no substantive difference here between being ‘justified’ and being ‘saved.’ Similarly, the content of the belief and that of the confession need to be merged.” In other words, confessing with your mouth is simply part of believing with your heart. If not, we may think Paul was saying we have two separate things “to do” which would contradict the rest of the teachings in Romans. I love how Keller puts it when he says, “All that is necessary is to transfer all our hopes out of our hands and our control, and into Christ’s.”

4. What is Paul saying in verse 11? Will we ever regret this choice of faith?

5. To whom is this promise of faith available, according to verses 12-13?

6. People are personally responsible for their decisions. Do you ever make excuses for those who you think are “good people” but who have refused to accept the Gospel message? How do Paul’s words challenge you?

7. This is kind of like a question I already asked, but a little different. What kind of excuses do we make for not doing what the Bible teaches, and how does the passage 10:6-10 undermine our excuses?

I want you to read this paragraph, and after pondering it for a while, write your thoughts. Christopher Ash wrote, “Let’s talk about the idea of people seeking God. Get rid of the shallow idea that there are basically good people all over the world seeking God (but finding it difficult because God has rather thoughtlessly not left enough evidence). Expose this as a myth. No human being by nature seeks God. Religious people seek a righteousness that will rebound to their credit, and will show how virtuous they are (9:31,32). Irreligious people sometimes stumble on the God they did not seek (9:30). Any true seeking happens only because God has put this seeking in a person’s heart by grace. The story is not ‘people in search of God’ (and some of them are lucky enough to find Him); but ‘God in search of people’ (and He finds everyone for whom He seeks).”

8. Thoughts?

I love the word “whoever” in verse 13. (Also found in Joel 2:32.) Salvation is available to all, no matter age, race, or gender. When I was proofing this lesson, I found an interesting typo, especially since this was the topic. I forgot the “G” in grace and wrote “race,” changing the whole context of the sentence, obviously. One misplaced or forgotten letter changed the whole meaning of a doctrine. I found this so significant in our day and age. One misplaced or forgotten “letter” or “truth” can change everything. When we veer off God’s plan for a moment, or off the straight path in a small, seemingly insignificant way, we can fall for false doctrine and adopt wrong perspectives. We can’t ever forget the “G” in grace Stay true to God’s Word and keep His truth in perspective!

Let’s end here for today. Lots to think about and meditate on. Think about when you became a believer. How did God seek YOU?

Fourth Day

Work on your verse again. It’s such an important one to know!

1. Read Romans 10:1-21, focusing on verses 14-21. Paul anticipates a series of questions that he thinks people will ask in response to his claims. These questions were designed to show that Israel was not at fault in their broken relationship with God. (To each question, Paul gives answers from the Old Testament to show that Israel was without excuse.) **What were those questions?**

2. How does he answer those questions? Explain Paul's reasoning. What is the point of his responses to all of them?

In verse 14, the word translated "preach" means "to be a herald" or to make announcements. A herald was said to be like a living newspaper, transmitting news by making announcements in the marketplace or in the city. So, the word "preach" isn't exactly like modern day sermons as we know them. They usually operated in the streets.

3. Knowing the above definition, how would you explain the role of the herald?

God sends us all out to herald His good news of salvation. Perhaps out on the mission field, maybe in the pulpit, or maybe even next door. We can have "beautiful feet" as we bring the Hope of Heaven to others.

4. What do your feet look like? Are they beautiful because they carry the Good News wherever they are sent? Or have they been refusing to move? What part are you playing in this task?
5. What keeps us from sharing our faith with unbelievers sometimes? What makes us hesitate?

6. Who shared the Gospel with you for the first time? (Have you thanked them for bringing you “glad tidings of good things?”)

7. Since yesterday was Christmas, the Nativity story is fresh in my mind. In Luke 2:15-20, after the angels told the shepherds about Christ being born, they went “with haste” to find Him. Then they “made widely known” what they saw and learned. What struck me was that no one seemed to tell them to share the Good News, they just did. Why was that, do you think? (I wonder why we have to be told...)

8. According to these verses, is evangelism necessary?

John Stott wrote, “The essence of Paul’s argument is seen if we put his six verbs in opposite order: Christ sends heralds, heralds preach, people hear, hearers believe, believers call, and those who call are saved.”

9. Paul quotes Isaiah in verses 20-21. (Read Isaiah 65:1-2.) Who is he referring to in verse 20? Then Paul uses verse 21 (his quote from Isaiah) to illustrate the real explanation for Israel’s rejection of the Gospel. Who was responsible for their rejection?

10. The paradox found in verses 20-21 is amazing. God makes Himself known to a surprising group of people (Gentiles), but waits patiently for disobedient people. Have you seen this happen?

What a chapter! I love the analogy of “beautiful feet,” don’t you? Many of us walk on a team that supports cancer and the name of our team is “Beautiful Feet!” (Get it??) I pray that you and I become better heralds of the Good News, spreading His love and hope to our unbelieving friends and family. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God! Can I get an Amen?

Fifth Day

Write out your verse by memory. I pray this one sticks in our brains forever!

1. Let’s read our chapter again and focus on some of the main thoughts. If Paul could be so grieved and heartbroken over the disbelief of his people, how must God have felt?
2. Verse 9 tells us that we are to “confess that Jesus is Lord.” Besides our initial confession of faith, how can we “confess He is Lord” in our everyday life?

When Paul talks about “hearing,” he most likely means more than simply exposure. The message of the Gospel needs to be really heard **and** understood. God’s message must be communicated clearly. Timothy Keller wrote, “Notice what Paul is teaching about evangelism here: It’s absolutely necessary (vs 14), it requires a willingness to speak out (preach), it requires not just proclamation but persuasion, getting a person to understand and see the importance of what they have understood (hear), it requires the transmission of a body of truth that is not a person’s opinion but the authoritative revelation from Christ and His apostles.”

3. Although Isaiah and Paul see those who preach as having “beautiful feet,” beauty is not always recognized. What do you think that means?

4. Keller also writes that “We must ensure that, wherever it is that God has placed us, no one around us can say they have not heard or understood.” So, I must ask, is there someone around you who needs to hear?

5. The imagery in verse 21 is God holding out His hands. What does that say to you?

Bruce Barton wrote, “God’s holding out His hands indicates a gesture of dual purpose: one of welcome and one of giving. But God’s welcome was spurned, and His gifts were rejected. The disobedience of Israel was judged by God’s welcome to the Gentiles (even though that was His plan all along). But He will still accept His chosen people if they will only return to Him. He remains faithful to His promises to His people, even though they have been unfaithful to Him. God still holds out His hands.” God’s favor to the Gentiles did not change His love for the Jews.

6. Regarding Christ being our way of salvation, James Montgomery Boice wrote, “It is a wounded hand that holds out salvation to you and invites you to come. Reach out and touch that hand. Then allow it to enfold you in an embrace that nothing on earth or in Heaven will ever diminish or disturb.” Thoughts?
7. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:11 that “some” are called to “be” evangelists, which is a spiritual gift. He also says to “do the work of an evangelist” in 2 Timothy 4:5. What’s the difference between the two? If we aren’t “called” to actually be an evangelist, are we still called to talk about our faith at some level?
8. How can special interests, current events, books, and entertainment be used as springboards to conversations about faith?

9. Do you ever feel pressure to “seal the deal” when sharing? Whose responsibility is that? How can understanding God’s sovereignty take that pressure off?

10. In verse 15, Paul refers to the Good News as the “Gospel of peace.” What peace is he talking about? Why does Paul call it that? (Romans 5:1)

Dr. E. Meyers Harrison said this: “There are four reasons why the church must send out missionaries: (1) *the command from above* -- ‘go ye into all the world’ (Mark 16:15); (2) *the cry from beneath*-- ‘send him to my Father’s house (Luke 16:27); (3) *the call from without* -- ‘come over and help us’ (Acts 16:9); and (4) *the constraint from within* -- ‘the love of Christ constraineth us’ (2 Corinthians 5:14).”

11. What part of this chapter speaks to you the most?

12. What part challenges or convicts you the most?

13. Has the Holy Spirit showed you any changes that need to be made?

