

**Home : Sermons : July 8, 2007*****How shall they preach unless they are sent?****Trinity Church Family Camp, July 8 2007***Introduction:**

The passage before us this morning is important for our understanding of how each of us came to be saved. It also is important for understanding how our children, our parents, our neighbors, our nation, and the world will be saved. These verses (13-16) are often quoted in sermons on missions or by missionaries in their prayer letters, often we don't take the time to understand their place in the flow of Paul's argument. Sometimes they are just used as a basis for a Great Commission appeal. As we look at the context, I don't think that they are a Great Commission appeal; however, in a succinct way they *do* present us with the process of how the world will be saved. And this is instructive in how we should go about evangelism and missions. So after we understand the place of these verses in the context of Paul's thought and argument, we will look at them again and draw some applications for our participation in God's mission to save the world.

Text:

Romans 9:30-10:21

Context:

The Apostle Paul has been developing the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In chapters 1-3 he stated the problem. In chapters 4 and 5 he presented the solution to the problem of sin – justification by faith in Christ. In 6-8 he answered two major questions: 1) if we are saved by grace, why not just sin up a storm? And 2) in chapter 7 he answers the objection. Then, in chapters 9-11, he answers the question "What role does Israel have in God's scheme of salvation?"

Overview

10:1-4 Paul expresses his feelings about the source of the problem: the Jews, though very zealous, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. They sought rather to establish their own righteousness.

10:5-13 Paul proceeds to exposit verse 4: and basically answers the question "Does this righteousness come by Law or by faith?" The implication of verse 13 is that none can be saved who do not call upon Him.

10:14-17 Paul anticipates an objection to what he just said in vv. 5-13. Someone might say, "but the Jews are not able to believe on Christ to save them unless God sends someone to preach to them. Can you really hold them accountable?" To this, Paul answers in the affirmative, in an intricate regressive sequence of parallel rhetorical questions:

He says, (v.14a) they can only call on the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sense of v. 12 and v. 13, if they have believed on Him. They can only believe on Him if they have heard of Him (v.14b). They can only hear Him, if someone preaches the message of the Gospel to them (v.14c). And the message of the Gospel can only be preached if someone is sent to proclaim it to them (v.15a). So, to paraphrase verse 14 and the first part of verse 15, Paul is saying "How then can men believe the Gospel unless it has been proclaimed?" (v.14, 15a). He answers this question in 15c, quoting Isaiah 52:7.

(v.16) 'But (inspite of this preaching) the Jews have not all obeyed the gospel, and this Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 53:1 that the message would not be received: "Lord, who has believed our report?"'

(v.17) 'Which confirms what I said earlier, to have faith, to believe, one must hear the gospel, and the gospel is heard through the Word of God (and this Word of God is the word about Christ, and not about works righteousness)'.

Then in (v.18) we have another hypothetical question: 'ut maybe the Jews didn't hear?' Paul says, 'Impossible! Of course they have heard the gospel, as Psalm 19:4 tells us'.

(v.19) 'Okay, they heard, but maybe they didn't understand?'

(v.20) 'Isaiah also boldly says: "*I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.*"'

Finally in (v.21) Paul says that Isaiah says: "*All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.*" (Isa.65:1).

Nations turning to God (10:1)

In verse 1 Paul says that his heart's desire and prayer is that the nation of Israel as a whole be saved. Now from other passages we know Paul thought of salvation as being an individual thing, since individuals have to call on the name of the Lord; but, here we see him also thinking corporately, something that we American Christians often find hard to do, especially when we do evangelism. Paul's desire here is not just that individuals, say a 'mega-church worth of Jews', be saved; he desires and prays that *all Israel* be saved! We need to change our way of thinking and praying about missions and evangelism. We read of households being

baptized in Acts as the Gospel spread. So, just because such cases are rare for us, that doesn't mean we shouldn't expect them and pray for them, just as the Apostle Paul prays –for our towns, for our nation, and for the people's of the world.

'Unless they are sent'

In verses 14-17 we see the biblical pre-conditions that need to be in place in order for any people to be saved. Looking at them backwards, we see first that: 1) the preacher must be sent; 2) the sent preacher must preach the Gospel; 3) the preached Gospel must be heard; 4) the Gospel preached must be believed; and 5) the belief must be of the kind that calls on the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Let's talk about *sending*. The work of missions is a corporate work of the church, not an individual work. Paul, who was commissioned to be an Apostle by Jesus Christ directly, didn't just go out under his own authority. If anyone could have justified it, he could have. The work of missions is a corporate work of the church, so the church should officially do the sending.

And there is another aspect to consider. There is the official sending that we should not neglect in the Church; but, there is another way in which we are all '*sent*' into the world as we walk out the doors of the church every Lord's Day –that is, as the corporate daily witness of the body of Christ in our communities.

Lost without Jesus Christ

So if the Church does not send the preacher, the Gospel will not be preached. If the Church doesn't live out the Gospel, it won't be preached in another important sense. And, if the Gospel isn't preached, the lost will not hear. If the lost don't hear, they will not believe. If they can't believe, they will not call and be saved.

The lost are really lost, and going to Hell, which is a dreadful reality according to Scripture. This truth ought to sober us up and fire up our desire for the nations to be saved! ... For our neighbors ... for those we work with. It should fire up the Church to get back to sending missionaries and holding them accountable.

God's sovereignty and the world

It is hard to read 9:15 "*I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion*" and later, 10:21, "*All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people*" and not think about the paradox of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Our fleshly reaction is to point the finger at God and accuse Him of injustice. But Paul has no problem with both these truths, and we shouldn't either.

Imitating Israel?

Finally, there is something else I would like to point out. And that is, the danger of imitating Israel. While we work at reforming the Church in America, at reforming our marriages, at reforming our worship, let us never forget that the Gospel is not just meant for us, for our families, for our church communities, for our Christian schools –we must remember that it is meant for the world! (Example of the Dutch Calvinists that went to South Africa).

Conclusion & Application:

So, what should we take away from this?

1. Pray for the Church to send out missionaries; and pray like the Apostle Paul for nations to be saved, including Israel.
2. We must believe the Scriptures: the the lost are perishing; there is no other way to salvation.
3. The Gospel is for the nations (not just you and your family, or your church community); don't be like Israel who had no place for the Gentiles.
4. We can you know that we are saved. And this should lead us to great gratitude for God's grace shown to us in Christ.
5. We will be held accountable for having heard, just like Israel.

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