

What Shall They Hear?

July 11, 2010

Romans 10:1-17

❖ Introduction

Many of us, having recently come to an understanding of the implications of God's sovereignty, have often wondered what impact these truths have upon our evangelistic declaration of the Gospel. Somehow, the same words we may have considered using before don't seem consistent with a deeper understanding of how it is that we are saved (called soteriology). However, declaring the gospel is not like reciting an incantation or some mystical set of words. Instead it is a message which is declared with clarity, boldness and faith.

We are told in the Scriptures to be ready to give an account for the hope that is in us at all times. We need to make sure that we are giving an account of our hope *truthfully*. Therefore, content is critical.

❖ A Biblical, Foundational Pattern for Evangelism

In this section of Romans, Paul gives to us the example of a genuine love for his lost countrymen. While he is writing to his brethren in Christ, he reveals his love for his lost *ethnic* brethren.

Notice that his love is made manifest in his prayer to God for the salvation of Israel. We see a pattern for us that prayer is at the very heart of our evangelism. Because God is the One who softens hearts; because God is the One who makes alive those who were once dead; because the Spirit goes where He wishes like the wind making men be born again, when we pray to God for the lost, we are talking to the right Person!

The means by which God has ordained that people are saved is by His grace through faith. The faith comes by hearing the preached Gospel. But what shall they hear?

❖ Bad News at the Heart of the Gospel

◆ All Are Dead Through a Deep, Covenantal Union with Adam - Romans 5:12

One of the most widespread lies that is spread across the globe is that mankind is basically good. We believe that the bad things we do are really contrary to the *real us* who prefer to do good things. The truth however, is that not only are the things that *we may do* sinful, but sinfulness is *what we are naturally*. This is a very tough bite to swallow for the natural man.

Why call this a *deep* covenant? The answer is because of the tremendous effect that Adam's actions had upon all of humanity. The curse has been passed to all of those who bear his nature.

◆ All are Dead by Choice - Romans 3:9-20

Not only are we dead because of our just association with Adam, we are also judged because in our own sin, we are declaring our approval of Adam's actions and agreeing with his rebellion. We are sinners before we are born because of our covenant of creation through Adam, and then we demonstrate that we are by nature sinners in our own actions as we grow up.

◆ All Are Doomed to Eternal Destruction - Acts 24:22-27

As a natural consequence to our association with Adam and our declaration of agreement with Adam through our own sin, we are to be judged as God-haters. The sentence for this judgment is eternal separation from God and any of the blessings that come through His presence. Given that God has not removed His Spirit from this earth yet, we have no way of conceiving how terrible it would be to be eternally separated from Him. We can't even imagine what a separation like that would be for one hour let alone eternity.

The world however, wants us to soft sell this point. Since this rightfully breeds fear in the hearts of man, we tend to think that this would be a bad thing—but Paul didn't. Felix was terrified at the things that Paul said and sent him away. We have no indication that this was a blown witnessing opportunity by Paul. To miss or hide the eternal consequences for sin is to deny the justice of God and to diminish His mercy. Once we understand the degree to which we are deserving punishment only then will we understand the great mercy that He has shown toward us.

❖ Good News at the Heart of the Gospel

◆ Covenantal Condemnation Required Covenantal Salvation - 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

In the same way that the problem occurred, God has provided a covenantal resolution. The descendants of Adam (all of humanity) are included in him by their nature resulting in condemnation. The descendants of Jesus Christ (the Elect) are included in Him by their new nature of faith resulting in justification. In either case the descendants are represented by their head.

In the midst of this impossible predicament, God, by His own good pleasure, saw fit to extend His mercy to many by not imputing our sins to us and instead imputing the righteousness of His Son to us.

◆ Called, Justified and Glorified – Romans 8:28-30

God has called us out of our darkness and given to us the righteousness of His Son. With this righteousness, God declares us to be no longer guilty before the law—this is justification. But God loves goes even further, He places us in His Son who is seated at His right hand and has given us dominion with Christ in His kingdom.

◆ He Makes Us Into Sons of God – 1 John 3:1-3; Galatians 4:6-7

Naturally, we are part of God's creation and we can somewhat comprehend the Creator/Creature distinction. But When God saves us, He adopts us into His family and gives us His name and we become joint heirs through Christ. To further demonstrate our position as His children, He sends His Spirit to dwell in us as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.