

Send And Sent: The Case For Global Missions

Romans 10:14-17

Introduction

Paul set aside chapters 9-11 to address the issue of Israel's spiritual past, present and future. Paul's purpose in part was to explain how God could set aside His chosen people and still save and restore the nation in the future. Chapter 9 deals with Israel's past. Chapter 10 Israel's present spiritual condition. Paul has given us reasons for Israel's rejection (vv.1-13) and now will address the remedy for Israel's rejection; (1) messengers must be sent; (2) they must declare the Gospel; (3) sinners hear the Word; (4) sinners believe the Word; (5) they call upon Christ; (6) they are saved (see Wiersbe's New Testament Outlines pp.393-394). We often speak from this passage about global evangelism. And certainly we can apply the passage to the subject of global evangelism! But let us for at least a moment remind ourselves of the context. Israel. The gospel is to the Jew first and then the Greek.

Because the offer of salvation is real; available to all (including the Jewish people); individuals are responsible for accepting or rejecting Christ (vv.8-10). The Gospel message makes people accountable to God; and whoever believes and embraces that message will be saved (vv.11-15). People who embrace Christ are obligated and encouraged to bring that Good News to others! Salvation is impossible apart from the gospel (vv.14-15); and therefore the gospel is universal; that is it applies to Israel and all the nations (vv.16-17). The key word "righteousness" permeates the chapter. If the source of God's righteousness is in Christ (v.4); and available through the gospel; if receiving that righteousness is believed in the heart and confirmed by our mouth (vv.9-10); and is both impartial and universal in it's application (vv.11-13); than it makes perfect sense that everyone should be given the opportunity to hear the gospel and believe the gospel (vv.14-17).

I read an interesting statistic; 16 million sermons would be preached in the United States in the year 2014.

There are some 30 plus million people living in the United States who were born outside of the United States. We have an unreached mission field in our own backyard. The US Department of Commerce estimates that 56 million visitors and tourists come to the US each year and spent 100 billion plus dollars. There are more than a 500,000 foreign students in our colleges and universities. In Chicago there are more Muslims than Methodists. There are more Buddhists than Episcopalians. Our population of Muslims and Hindu's continues to grow while main-line Christian denominations are on the decrease. There are more than 1200 mosques in America. What percentage of those who have converted to Islam left the ranks of cultural Christianity?

And what of the rest of the world?

Opportunity To Hear The Gospel Must Be Given (vv. 14-15)

Romans 10:14 (NKJV) 14How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Paul asks four questions:

1. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?"

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Apart from hearing the message no one can believe. How shall they call on Him (Jesus)? Salvation is in another (not self). We cannot save ourselves. That message is offensive and objectionable to many!

Paul has already argued that a person must believe in their heart and confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus (vv.9-10). Salvation is not simply embracing a set of theological rules or interesting ideas. Remember salvation is always by blood (innocent, shed, applied). Salvation is always through a person. Salvation is always by grace. Grace that manifests itself in a sinner's faith and confession followed by the Savior's peace.

But what good is a gospel that no one ever hears?

2. "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"
3. "And who shall they hear without a preacher?"
4. "And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"

The Lord sends. We are sent! The Jewish Scriptures speak of a salvation for all; and if salvation is for all; then this involves calling; believing; hearing; preaching; sending!

Stott observes that "the essence of Paul's argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved." Hodge points out that this argument is founded on the principle that if God wills the end—God must also will the means to reach the end.

Why preach? Because God has ordained preaching! Paul argues that a universal preaching of the gospel is absolutely necessary if the prophets words are to be fulfilled!

God uses preachers and preaching to reach the lost!

This is the basis of the Christian missionary movement! Paul is vindicating the preaching of the gospel to the nations! This idea of global missions was inexcusable to the Jews!

How in the world does Jesus "send" people?

What are the qualifications of a person who is sent? Don't you think it includes people who are themselves saved? Do you have a simple love for Jesus? Not a perfect love—but a simple and enthusiastic love. If you love Jesus you will grow and learn to love what Jesus loves. Jesus loves the Jewish people. Jesus loves the Gentile people. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Jesus wept over "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Our love for Jesus is a gift from God. We love Him because He first loved us. Are you a believer in the Word of God? Are you a student of the

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Bible? Are you a lover of the Jewish people? Are you patient? Are you sensitive to the feelings and needs of the Jewish people?

Do you as a believer need a special call or personal invitation to preach the Gospel to others? What if I told you that Jesus has already extended the invitation to you? Jesus—in his commission to the disciples (Matt.28:18-20) said; “. . . All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Permission granted. Jesus said “Go”. The real challenge rests for those who interpret ‘go’ to mean stay!

Paul concludes with a quote from Isaiah 52:7 ; “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

We rarely think of the person who brought us the gospel as the person with beautiful feet!

But someone shared Christ with you! Your parents. Your Sunday School teacher. Your VBS worker. That person on the radio or TV or internet. People usually come to Christ either by preaching or personal evangelism. Who told you about Jesus? Maybe now would be a good time to pray for that person. Let them know that you were thinking about them and how God used them in your life.

Has the Lord called you to preach glad tidings of peace? The peace is peace with God.

Will God someday call you to a faraway place? Perhaps. But the most effective missionaries realize that outreach and evangelism begin at home.

Obedience To The Gospel Must Be Embraced (vv.16-17)

16But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”

Opportunity compels necessity. What happens when an opportunity is neglected or ignored? Opportunity ignored invites tragedy. Preaching the Gospel is not tragic. Ignoring the Gospel is tragic. What happens when the people reject the gospel? What happens when people refuse to obey the Gospel? This is the Preacher’s Dilemma: hearing does not always involve believing. Israel heard the gospel but did not obey the gospel.

Isaiah (53:1) preached a powerful message that was resisted and ignored.

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The question calls for an answer: Not many. Note Paul's quote of Isaiah 53:1; "Who has believed our report?" Isaiah gave a message from God to Israel. Belief and unbelief sprang from that message; a message heard!

The context of Isaiah's quote is Isaiah's message about a servant, a messiah who would come. Isaiah speaks of the Servant's mission, and his obedience. The chosen servant's ministry is described, his crucifixion (chapter 52:14); resurrection (52:13b) and redemption (52:15). Isaiah realizes that his prophecies about a suffering servant and the coming Messiah are so amazing that few would actually believe it!

Isaiah 53:1 "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (2) For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. (3) He is despised and rejected by men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (4) Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, and He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah describes Messiah's background and beauty (vv.1-2). He describes those who are responsible for Christ's death (v.4); he dies for the sins of those who hate him—that is all of us! Isaiah's message describes someone who is belittled in life and brutalized in death (vv.5-6; 8-9). Isaiah describes someone who like a sheep is led to the slaughter. Isaiah describes someone whose death brings life and is honored for his greatness (53:12).

Not everyone believed. Not everyone listened. The Gospel can be accepted but it can also be rejected, scorned, disregarded. Why are some without faith (outside faith)? Paul will later argue there is no reasonable excuse for this neglect and rejection (see vv.18-21).

This is why Paul draws the conclusion;

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The prepositions by (ek) "out of" and the second by (*dia*) "through"; give us clues;

and hearing by the word of God (theou) is "of Christ" (Christou)—in the oldest Greek manuscripts; Williams gives the translation; "so faith comes from hearing what is told, and hearing through the message about Christ".

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If faith comes by hearing ‘what is told’ what do you have to say? Paul tells us it is the message of Christ! In 1 Peter 3:15 Peter writes; “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” Whatever else that means—it must mean that you must know the Lord before you can share the Lord. “always be prepared” must mean that we are to actively look for opportunities—divine appointments—the Holy Spirit brings your way. Give an answer to everyone who asks—the context of 1 Peter 3 is Peter’s exhortation to godly conduct when things are difficult. Peter has been speaking about respect and role models; and difficulty in personal relationships. We are to live in harmony; worshipping the Lord; ready to explain and defend our godly conduct in potentially abusive situations.

Give an answer. Give a reason. Be prepared to share your testimony. Why did you become a Christian? How did Christ change your life?

Does Paul suppose that the simple act of hearing is sufficient to generate faith? Clearly Paul knows that people must have both an open ear and an open heart. People must be willing to be shown the truth of God. Does the message ring true? Does the message reflect the human condition and provide a solution?

Is faith limited by hearing? Can a person read the message? I think Paul means to receive the word by whatever means! How do we get faith? Not Catholic faith or Protestant faith. Paul speaks here of saving faith!

Conclusion

There are thousands of foreign students from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe who have grown up in homes and cultures where group and community are vital and essential. Did it ever occur to you to connect to those international students by offering your home and church family? When Jesus said ‘go’ he wasn’t simply talking to pastors, teachers or even missionaries. We can go—and we don’t have to go far to bring the gospel to Asians, Latin Americans, Europeans or Africans.

Remember the context of our passage. Paul’s heartbeat for the Jews. But we must also remember Paul’s calling—he describes himself as an Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul loves the Jews. Paul loves the pagan Gentiles—and that passion translates to employing his massive intellect to the task of persuading all men everywhere to believe in Jesus.

The case for global missions begins with a passion. Do you remember Jesus’s words; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Remember a witness is someone who has a knowledge of the facts; a reputation for honesty; and a willingness to tell the truth. Remember God is a God who loves the people of Asia, Africa and the

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America's. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to use us to build a community of believers from every tribe, every tongue, every nation. In order to do that you must be willing to enter their world.

What is your passion? Paul's passion was his love for the Jews—but he was willing to enter the world of the Greek and the Roman. Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable with people of other races or religions? It could be that your fascination with Africa or Asia or South America could be God's way of reaching out to other people! God may be calling you to an exciting cross-cultural ministry—and it might begin right here right now!

Is there a divine appointment in your future? Paul in Colossians 4:5 wrote; "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity". Opportunities can come at any time; on a bus, sushi bar or a grocery store. Pray the Holy Spirit will guide you. Pray for the opportunity to share Christ. To share the Gospel. Pray when you meet people. Don't assume that because a person is a Muslim or Mormon or Hindu or Buddhist or Skeptic or Atheist that they are not curious or even fascinated by the story of Jesus. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is—and not everyone who self identifies with a group or religion is content.

Don't be discouraged if someone seems uninterested or rejects the gospel. Not everyone will believe your report. Our job is to witness. It is the Holy Spirit's job to convince and convict. And please pray.