

Romans 10:10-15 +1 Challenge Sunday 10/29/17

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 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!”

(Pastor prays)

Today is our +1 Mission Challenge. It's the day I ask you to consider recommitting — or committing for the first time— to giving financially to missions at Hickory Grove. We have named it “+1” because I’m asking you to commit at least one percent of your annual income— over and above your regular offering —to the outward-focused ministries that Hickory Grove is involved with.

Our church is not an “attractional” church that focuses merely on events to attract people. We are a *missional* church turning our resources and our intentions *outward* outside the church where the need is real and the Gospel must be heard.

You can find where your missional dollars go in your bulletin. In addition to those statistics, Hickory Grove is a part of planting churches in Toronto, Pittsburgh, Washington and, most recently, Boston. On top of that, we are supporting missionaries all across the globe in South America, as well as Central and Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and three in Central America. This year well over 200 people have been on mission trips, with 18 trips already scheduled for next year. Your +1 giving makes that possible.

Last week was Operation Charlotte for our church through which hundreds of people were fed and clothed and had their cars repaired. Teachers were served at a local elementary school. Senior adults had their yards maintained. Refugees were ministered to and pregnancy centers were helped. Many of our members fearlessly stood against

abortions. All of these hundreds of acts of service were accompanied by a verbal witness about the love of God and the saving power of Christ. It's who we *are* and it's what we *do*.

As sinners saved by grace, we become men and women sent by God. It's why I read this passage. As long as there are hurting people in the world and lost people going to Hell, as long as there are racists spewing hate and confusion about the future, Hickory Grove will be among the churches standing for truth and living the Gospel.

It's what this passage speaks to. I read from verse 10 to verse 15, but I want to call your attention specifically to verses 14 and 15. In these two verses, the Apostle Paul gives us four probing questions, rhetorical questions that are meant to lead us to the beauty of mission. Paul quotes Isaiah in verse 15, "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*" The Good News is the Gospel. God – Man – Christ – Response. +1 helps us be Gospel people at Hickory Grove. We want to be Gospel People and

Gospel People are Sent People

Verses 14-15 is a "golden chain of grace" in four questions. Let's take the questions in reverse and build up to the point of salvation. If people are going to be saved...

Someone Has to Be Sent

See the question down in verse 15: How are they to preach unless they are sent? And the obvious answer is: they won't. If we don't see ourselves as missionaries, as ambassadors for Christ, then we won't share Christ. If we don't break out of our suburban cocoons and comfortable middle-class existence, then the Gospel won't go forward.

People come to Christ because they hear the message of the Gospel. God sends messengers, and *you* are the messenger. In Isaiah 6 God says "Who shall we send, who will go for us?" And Isaiah says, "Here I am Lord, send me." The church is the missionary force sent into Bradfield Farms, Mint Hill, Harrisburg and East Charlotte. I want to know who is here saying, "Send me" to UNCC and Queens Grant, Porter Ridge and CPCC? Someone has to be sent down to Albemarle Road and up Mallard Creek and *that* someone is *you*. Every time you write your address or zip code, you've been given the coordinates of your mission field. Someone has to be sent and that someone is *you*.

Your adoption papers in Christ become your marching orders for the Gospel, to bring the saving power of Christ to bear on the brokenness and bitterness, on the racism and classism that separates us. Do you see yourself like that? Who's going to have that conversation? Who's going to make that phone call? Who's going to step across the street if you don't? Gospel people are *sent* people. Someone has to be sent.

That Sent One Must Bring Good News

You find this at the end of verse 14. "And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" Preaching – *kérussó* – to proclaim...To tell it...A verbal explanation. Isn't this what Peter meant in 1 Peter 3:15, *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*

Our church and the Gospel mission is not doing ministry to "help people in need." We are addressing the *greatest* need people have. They not only need to be fed, they need the *true* "bread" that is Jesus. People not only need to be *clothed*, they need to be *covered* in the righteousness of Christ. The ministries we do all point to the ministry of Christ, living perfectly, dying sacrificially in the place of sinners so that people in Charlotte and Concord, Kannapolis and Mint Hill and Harrisburg can be saved from the wrath of God.

And that's what the Good News is. Every person, every soul is estranged from God because of sin. That sin is a crime that must be punished. Jesus took the punishment on the cross. He did so in the place of sinners and became the Good News of the Gospel. God's people are *sent* people. Someone has to be sent and that *sent* one must bring Good News.

That Good News Must Be Believed

This question is in the middle of verse 14. "And how are they to believe in whom they have never heard?" Believe. A saving faith is a belief in the *facts* about Jesus. It's why we teach theology and demand Biblical doctrine, because the facts about Jesus are important to grasp. Oftentimes people's faith is weak because the facts are not known. It's what the Reformation was about: finding out what the Book, the Bible, says.

What are the facts about Jesus? Back in Romans 10:9, you have the most succinct description of what you must believe. *Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* It means you recognize and submit to His authority in Heaven and Earth and over your life. You trust His sovereignty and role as deity. It means that you worship His majesty. You fall under His mercy and rely on His grace.

Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. In that one little phrase you have the crucifixion and the resurrection combined: dying for sinners, raised as a victor in death, dying to set you free and raised to make you rejoice. Those are facts that *must* be believed.

But mere belief isn't enough to establish a saving faith. James says that even the demons believe that much, and they tremble. So, what do you do? Follow the chain. God's people are sent people. Someone has to be sent. That sent one must bring Good News. That Good News must be believed.

Genuine Belief Means Calling on Christ in Faith

This brings us to the beginning and here we will include verse 13. Let's read 13 & 14 together. *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

It's not enough to believe the facts about Jesus, that He lived, died on the cross and was raised. That belief in those facts must lead to you calling out to Him. God sovereignly calls people to Himself. And all who will be saved must call upon Him in faith, coming to Christ in your heart for all that He has done for you, that He lived perfectly because you can't. He died on the cross in your place. He was raised from the dead and is Lord of all. Calling on Him means believing that with your heart and then confessing with your mouth: Jesus is Lord. To call on the name of the Lord means to treasure Him above all, to praise His majesty and power and holiness...in short, to worship Him.

John Piper said it best: missions exist because worship *doesn't*. We are sent because people *don't* worship the God of the Bible.

God's people are *sent* people. *Someone* has to be sent. That sent one *must* bring Good News. That Good News *must* be believed. Genuine belief means calling on Christ in faith.

Come forward for prayer and confession. Pray about a call to ministry or for a lost friend. Come forward to pray for someone and call on the name of the Lord to be saved.

(Pastor prays)