

Message #37

Romans 10:14-21

Just recently, I read a fascinating statistic about the sale of Bibles in the United States:

- 1) 20 million Bibles are sold in the United States every year.
- 2) 1.66 million Bibles are sold in the United States every month.
- 3) 384,615 Bibles are sold in the United States every week.
- 4) 54,945 Bibles are sold in the United States every day.
- 5) 2,289 Bibles are sold in the United States every hour.
- 6) 38 Bibles are sold in the United States every minute.
- 7) 6.4 Bibles are sold in the United States every 10 seconds.

Wow, that is a lot of Bibles.

Also, there are 1,600 Christian broadcasting organizations in the United States that broadcast Christian programming. In fact, it is estimated that 215 million people listen to Christian music every month.

Wow, that's big.

There are nearly 20,000 private, religious schools in the United States and millions of children attend those schools.

That is a lot of learning.

Why is it, with all of these amazing statistics, there are so few Christians? Why can't we turn on the news and hear things that honor God? With all of this exposure to "Christian" activity, what has gone wrong here?

There are actors, athletes, musicians, politicians that all say they are Christian, so why isn't Biblical Christianity dominating the United States? The answer to that is found right here in Romans.

If ever there were a nation who had great exposure and information about God, it was Israel. Israel had seen God do amazing things. She had seen God do supernatural things for her that He has never done with any other nation.

The Bible was written by men from Israel. She saw God deliver her from enemies in miraculous ways. She had seen God's glory displayed at her place of worship. If that is not enough, Israel, as a nation, actually saw the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in Person. He came and He died and He was raised from the dead. She knew that and saw that. With all of this data, why is Israel lost? How come she does not have a close relationship with God that is seen by the whole world?

Paul answers that here and what he says is this:

THOSE WHO HAVE HEARD THE GOSPEL THAT INVITES ANY SINNER TO CALL OUT TO JESUS CHRIST FOR SALVATION WILL NOT BE CONDEMNED FOR THEIR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE; THEY WILL BE CONDEMNED FOR THEIR ARROGANT REJECTION AND REBELLION AGAINST TRUTH.

What is seen in this text explains why friends and relatives are not saved. This explains why most people will not call on Jesus Christ to save them. It is not because they have not heard the message, it is because they have arrogantly rejected and rebelled against the message.

We are in a powerful section concerning the sovereignty of God in salvation and election. God determined before the foundation of the world who would be in His family and who would not be in His family.

As we have gone through this part of Romans, what we learn is the sovereignty of God in election is deeper than what we can even begin to grasp:

- 1) It includes a proclamation and witnessing of God's sovereign power (Rom. 9:17).
- 2) It includes prayer for election (Rom. 10:1).
- 3) It includes a sinner calling out to God for Jesus Christ to save him/her (Rom. 10:13).

Now in this text, we learn more about and how God elects and saves and who He does not elect and save:

Now to make this point, Paul presents two main salvific concepts:

SALVIFIC CONCEPT #1 – How God saves sinners through the gospel. 10:14-17

What Paul does in these verses is give great detail as to the process of how God saves sinners:

- 1) They must hear the word.
- 2) They must hear the word from a preacher.
- 3) The preacher preaches the good news of the gospel.
- 4) The sinner responds to the good news of the word of God.

There are four critical steps spelled out here that will take one from a lost status to a saved status. This is God's system that He has designed to save sinners, which includes Jews and Gentiles.

Step #1 - The lost person must call on Jesus Christ to save him. 10:14a

Paul specifically said that in **verse 13**, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Any person who has committed any sin, from any background, who has any guilt, regardless of any failure, who will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is what one must do to be part of the elect of God. That one must call on Jesus Christ to save him.

Step #2 - The lost person must believe in Jesus Christ to save him. **10:14b**

One who does call out to the Lord to save them believes by faith that the Lord can and will save them. This person does not believe the O.T. law can save him. This person does not believe his works can save him. This person believes only Jesus Christ can save him.

Step #3 - The lost person must hear about calling and believing in Jesus Christ from a preacher.
10:14c

It is more than just interesting to note that God uses a word for “preacher” (khrussw) that means to proclaim and preach as a herald (G. Abbott- Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 246). This word means to proclaim and announce the gospel message that centers on one object, Jesus Christ.

This is being lost today because this is actually talking about a man who is publicly proclaiming and heralding the gospel. God’s way to save people is some preacher accurately proclaims truth.

Step #4 - The preacher who preaches the good news of the gospel must be sent. **10:15-17**

In order for one to actually be used by God to present the gospel so lost people will respond, the preacher **must be sent**. Now of course the logical question to ask is “sent by whom?” What does this actually mean that he must be sent?

Most that use this verse do so as they go out on deputation, trying to get support to be sent to some mission place to preach the gospel. They want people to support them or send them, so they take **verse 15** and go from place to place trying to get support for them to go.

I do not think that is the grammatical point Paul is making. In fact, the word Paul uses for “sent” is the word apostle. The word sent suggests one who has official authority (*Ibid.*, p. 54). The verb sent is passive, which means the individual is the recipient of the action, not the source of the action. In other words, one who will be used by God to actually draw people to true salvation will be one He has sent, not someone who sent themselves.

So what Paul is saying is if people are to be saved, they must hear accurate preaching from one authorized by God to do it. One has been called and gifted by God to proclaim His word.

There are five types of preachers in the N.T.:

(Type #1) Preachers God called directly - Paul (Acts 9:6); Peter, John. (no longer today)

(Type #2) Preachers God calls indirectly - this is operative today:

- 1) God called some through the Apostles - Titus (Titus 1:4-5).
- 2) God called some through spiritual people - Timothy (I Tim. 4:14).
- 3) God calls some through local church - Stephen (Acts 6:25); Barnabas (Acts 13:1-2).

(Type #3) - Preachers men call - do not pray, do not ask God for wisdom, do not seek one gifted by God, business deal resume' or denomination appointment.

(Type #4) - Preachers who call themselves. They claim they are called and are preachers. They go from church to church. They are connected to some family in the church. They do not have a gift; they have an ego that drives them.

(Type #5) - Preachers Satan calls. In II Corinthians 11:13-15 they appear as good religious people, but cannot rightly divide Scripture. The Pharisees were of their father the Devil.

What Paul is saying is for people to truly be saved, there must be a gifted minister sent by God who will go and preach and herald the gospel.

Now Paul brings out three critical facts about these sent preachers:

(Fact #1) - Those who are sent and do preach the gospel are beautiful to God. 10:15

Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 to show that one who is called by God to proclaim the good news of the gospel and knows how to use the O.T. prophets and prophecies to do that are beautiful in the sight of God.

The sent preacher must have a grasp of the good news of the grace of God and he certainly can connect that good news to O.T. prophecy, specifically Isaiah.

(Fact #2) - Those who are sent and do preach the gospel do not win all people. 10:16

A preacher sent by God knows not all people will respond to the gospel. God literally sent His specific gifted men to unravel the gospel of grace to them and they rejected it.

The Isaiah 53 message that one would die in our place and pay the price for our sins is not a popular message most want to hear. It is not the vast majority of people who will believe the gospel and respond to the gospel.

By the way, we never change the message or stop proclaiming the message just because most don't like it or believe it.

(Fact #3) - Those who are sent and do preach the gospel do know faith comes by hearing the word of God. 10:17

True ministers of God know this and proclaim this. Faith is produced by accurately proclaiming the word of God as it relates to Jesus Christ. The noun "Christ" is used here because Israel was hearing that Jesus Christ was her Messiah and she was rejecting it. So faith is produced by preaching the truth about Jesus Christ.

Faith does not come by manipulation, begging, pleading or marketing. Faith is not produced by entertainment or gimmicks. True faith comes from an accurate preaching of God's word that is focused on Jesus Christ.

This is how people are saved. This is the process God uses to save people.

SALVIFIC CONCEPT #2 – How unsaved, non-elect sinners respond to the gospel. **10:18-21**

Unsaved people have no excuse:

Reality #1 - Unsaved people have heard. **10:18**

Most unsaved people in this country have heard the gospel. God first sent His men to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6). They didn't want to hear what they had to say. So God sent His messengers to the world and the vast majority did not want to hear what they had to say.

They don't want the message of grace and they don't like the message of grace. Israel has heard all about Jesus Christ and what He did. They give tours in Jerusalem of places He went.

The problem is not hearing truth, they have heard all about truth.

I am curious, in a congregation this size, is there any person here today who has never heard about Jesus Christ?

Reality #2 - Unsaved people have known. **10:19-20**

Unbelievers know things about God. They cannot plead ignorance. For one thing, God has put an intuitive knowledge of Himself in every person.

In fact, in this verse Paul quotes Moses in **verse 19** and Isaiah in **verse 20** to prove that not only did they know God's program, but God told them He would bring other people into the program by His sovereignty other than Jews.

He would bring people into a relationship with Him who knew nothing. They weren't looking for it and weren't seeking it.

Reality #3 - Unsaved people are disobedient and arrogant. **10:21**

Here is the problem—the people are arrogant and ignorant and disobedient. God says I stretch out My hands and offer you salvation.

The stretching out of hands certainly has to do with Jesus Christ on the cross and the offer of grace salvation.