

# Ministry of Grace Church

## Romans 10:11-21 – Proclaim the Good News!

### Sermon Notes



### Introduction

In the previous passage, Paul stated one of the most blessed truths that mankind has ever heard, namely that a heartfelt belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and a verbal confession that He is Lord results in a person receiving the righteousness of God and the promise of salvation from the penalty of his or her sins.

The problem that we encounter today is that most people don't believe in God, and many of those who do, don't really believe that He would send anybody to Hell. But neither of these facts are new. People have believed this way since time began. Just ask the people in Noah's day, not that anyone could go back in time and talk to those who perished in the flood. But – if you could go back and if you could ask them about God, it is likely that they would either say that there is no such thing as an all powerful, creator God, or they would say that He is a forgiving God of love who would never wipe out the entire population of the earth.

And, they might continue - even if He were a God who demands sinless perfection from everyone, the only way He would pardon anyone from his or her sins would be by demanding a ransom of some kind to pay for their shortcomings. Perhaps an animal sacrifice of some kind, or a long list of penitent actions to demonstrate a person's sincerity and remorse.

But that's not the kind of God He is! Yes, He is a loving God, a God of justice, but He also wants the type of recognition that He deserves from His people. So – if we are sin-sick humans who have trouble focusing on anything but ourselves, how can we possibly do anything good enough to prove to Him that we want to worship Him.

Now let's fast-forward from Noah's day to the first century AD when Paul wrote this letter. Imagine you're living in Rome, the captial city of a world-dominating empire with the most powerful military force. A civilization goverened by laws that put the rights of its citizens above everyone else. A country where being a citizen was the priviledge and honor of only a few.

It was a land where religion was important. In fact, it was so important that there was not just one god to worship, but a pantheon of gods. The worship of these gods became so ingrained in Roman life that even the Emperor of Rome was worshipped as a god in the flesh. However, in spite of their importance, most Roman citizens considered their religious activities as no more important than following any of the laws of the land. Religion was more of an obligation than anything else.

But not all Roman citizen held the same religious beliefs. There were some “religious fanatics” who believed in a single all-powerful God, and they chose to worship Him to the exclusion of all other gods. In the first century in Rome there appeared to be two different sects of this religion, those who believed in “The Old Way,” and those who believed in “The New Way.” Those of the Old Way were predominantly from the country of Israel who referred to themselves as Jews. They believed in strict adherence to the rules laid out in their sacred books. They believed that by keeping all the rules, they could demonstrate their righteousness before their God.

Those of the New Way, on the other hand, believed that God had sent His own Son to earth to live a perfect life, but He had been crucified by the Roman government, not because He did anything wrong, but because the Jews, being jealous of Him, insisted on it. According to adherents of this New Way, one simply had to believe in the Son of God and that belief in His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection were sufficient to put them in good standing with their God. Into this mix came Paul, an apostle of the New Way, who was intent on sharing the truth that God could be reconciled with anyone who believed in this Son of God, in His crucifixion and His resurrection.

Paul had written this letter to the Jewish people in Rome in an effort to convince them that the Old Way was not how their God wanted to be worshipped. Paul has been quoting some of the prophets of the Jews to show them that this one who they believed would come to save them, who they called The Messiah, was in fact the one they crucified. Paul has just quoted from the most famous of their prophets, a man named Moses, who had led the people out of their slavery in Egypt. He now quotes from another of their great prophets, by the name of Isaiah.

### **Romans 10:11-13**

**For the Scripture says, “whoever believes upon him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him, for “whoever calls on the name of the lord will be saved.”**

If you read through the prophecies of Isaiah in your Bible, you will notice that Paul does not quote him exactly. This is because Paul is quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. However, in reality, the two are saying the same thing. One of the things that Paul is doing by quoting this verse from Isaiah is demonstrating to the Jewish Christians in Rome that there really is no difference between how the Jews are saved and how Christians are saved.

When Paul refers to Greeks in these verses, he’s not referring exclusively to the Greek people; he means all non-Jews or all Gentiles. Since the common language of the entire Roman Empire was Greek, it became a common expression among the Jews to refer to all Gentiles as Greeks.

Paul states that the same Lord who is over us all is rich in his giving to all of us who call on Him, whether we are Jew or Gentile. God will freely bestow His riches of grace and mercy upon all who submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and call upon Him for salvation.

One of the most amazing things about this gospel message is its simplicity. Paul states that “**Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.**” It does not require obeying a lot of rules, it does not require church membership, and it does not require payment of a large sum of money. It simply

requires the penitent sinner to realize his or her helpless condition and to appeal to God to save him or her.

There are two things we want to mention about this simple act, however. First, the expression “call on the name” means to call upon God Himself. The second thing is the implication made by this calling on the Lord. This implication is that the person calling realizes their need for salvation. In other words, before one can be saved, he or she must realize that he or she needs to be saved. This realization along with the act of appealing to God indicates a submission on the part of the sinner. Speaking to God or invoking the name of Jesus and demanding or claiming salvation will produce nothing. But for a person who realizes that he or she is a sinner deserving of Hell who cannot save himself or herself, appealing to God for salvation is an act of submission that produces the guarantee of salvation.

### **Romans 10:14-17**

**How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news of good things!” However, they did not all heed the good news, for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

Paul was seen as a traitor by many who believed that he deserted the Jews and their adherence to the Law as the way to righteousness, and that he had turned to the way of the Gentiles. Paul, himself, will say in the next chapter of this letter that he was called to be the Apostle (one sent with a message) to the Gentiles (**Romans 11:13**). And he has been demonstrating in this chapter that salvation and righteousness are through faith, which belongs both to the Jews and the Gentiles. And in the previous verse he proclaimed, “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

Since that “whoever” includes the Gentiles, he now makes the point that the Gentiles need to hear the gospel message. He says, in order to call on Him they have to believe first, and in order to believe they have to hear the good news, and the only way they will hear the good news is through the preaching. This is the very crux of Paul’s ministry, preaching the gospel message to the Gentiles so they can believe and be saved.

The Jews have had the Law and the Prophets proclaiming the gospel message to them for centuries (as Paul has just demonstrated), but the Gentiles have been denied these sources, so they need someone to proclaim the message of salvation to them. However, Paul is not the only one who is supposed to proclaim the blessed news of salvation by grace through faith. All of us who possess the gift of eternal life have an obligation to proclaim the news to those around us. This gospel (the good news), is offered to all of mankind!

Paul now gives us some insight as to how God views those who openly proclaim the message of salvation. He does so by quoting a passage from Isaiah:

**How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who proclaims good news, Who announces peace And proclaims good news of good things, Who announces salvation ... (Isaiah 52:7)**

The reason for referring to the feet is because it is the part of the body that transports us to where there are people who need to hear the message. Our Heavenly Father sees exquisite beauty in the preaching of the Good News of salvation.

Paul has told us how simple it is to be saved (**Romans 10:9** - that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved). He has also

just said that anyone, Jew or Gentile, can get saved (**Romans 10:13** - For "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.")

Paul now gives a response to an anticipated objection by the Jewish Christians in Rome which might sound something like this, "If all that you say is true, then how come there are so many who don't believe?" Or, as Paul has just stated it, "they did not all heed the good news."

In response to this objection, Paul now quotes from Isaiah at the very beginning of chapter 53,

**Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?**

This is an interesting statement by Isaiah because it applies both to the response of the people of his own day who wouldn't listen to his messages, as well as to people in the days of the future coming of the Messiah.

Paul's point is that Isaiah predicted many years ago that most of the Jews (as well as the Gentiles) would reject the message about the Messiah even in the face of overwhelming evidence. And this is still true today. In spite of the evidence of prophecy and historical verification of the death of Jesus Christ, many today would rather believe that we have evolved from single cell amoeba than to believe that God created us, wants us to have a personal relationship with Him, and sent His Son to die on the cross to pay for our sins so that we can have that personal relationship with Him.

Though many people throughout history have not listened attentively to the message of salvation, it is from this message that faith is acquired. This message originated from Almighty God. We have been given this precious, powerful message to carry throughout the world. Also remember, that when we carry and proclaim this message, God sees us as particularly beautiful, like a flower in full bloom.

Faith cannot exist unless there is a message, or report, to be heard and believed. It cannot come any other way than by such a proclamation. This demonstrates the importance of the message, and the fact that people are converted by listening to and believing the truth of this gospel message. And ultimately, the source of this message is the very utterance of God Himself.

### **Romans 10:18-21**

**But I say, have they never heard? On the contrary, they have; "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I anger you." And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for me." But as for Israel He says, "All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."**

Paul now anticipates the objection from the Jewish Christians in Rome that not everyone has heard God's message. He responds to this theoretical objection by asking one of his rhetorical questions, "Have they really not heard?" And his response is even more emphatic, "Of course they have!"

The Gospel message continues to be carried to all inhabited parts of the earth. It is our responsibility as Christians. We are to boldly proclaim it to everyone. And even though there may be some who have not heard the gospel message of Jesus' death and resurrection, they are not innocent because there is sufficient evidence in God's creation that proclaims God's magnificence and man's sinfulness.

Paul continues with, "But I say, did Israel not know?" The implication is that Israel should have known, but they didn't. The question that we have to ask ourselves is, "Know what?" Clearly, Paul has been talking about all people having evidence of God's supremacy and man's inability to be as righteous as God. But I don't think that's what Paul is referring to in this verse. Based on what he says in the

following verses, I think Paul is referring to the fact that Israel clearly should have known that God was going to turn from the Jews and the message was going to go out to the Gentiles.

In order to make this point, Paul now quotes Moses from the fourth book of the Bible. In **Deuteronomy 32:21** he says:

They have made Me jealous with *what* is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with *those who* are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a wickedly foolish nation,

Paul's point is clear. If the Israelites had studied their Scriptures, then they would have known that God was going to turn to the Gentiles because of the unfaithfulness of Israel. The problem was that too many of the Israelites did not know what was written in their scriptures.

Moses said that the Jews should have well known that the Gentiles would come to know God even though they weren't seeking after God in Moses' time. Therefore, it should have been obvious to the Christian Jews in Rome that God had indeed turned to the Gentiles after the Jews rejected the Messiah.

Paul now quotes Isaiah to show that he, too, had proclaimed the same message hundreds of years after Moses did. This quotation is from the opening portion of Isaiah chapter 65:

"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask *for Me*; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name. "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk *in* the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks, Who sit among graves and spend the night in secret places, Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of offensive meat is *in* their pots, Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. (**Isaiah 65:1-5**)

Clearly, this is a scathing rebuke upon the Israelites who would not pay attention to Moses and to those who did not listen to Isaiah. In fact, when Paul introduced this quotation, he stated that Isaiah is very bold in saying this. Why was it so daring for him to deliver this message? Remember what he said in **Isaiah 53:1**? "Who has believed our report?" It was bold of Isaiah to proclaim this because he knew that his fellow Jews would not believe him and would, in fact, attack him for being so negative to them.

The most important things that we can learn from these verses, however, are not just that He rejected the Jews and received the Gentiles; rather, there are a couple of things for us to know about our God. In Paul's quotation, Isaiah is speaking for God when he says, "All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people"

The first thing we can learn about God from this is that He is longsuffering. In this verse he says "all day long" which implies not just for a single day but for an extended length of time that God was, and is, willing to put up with our sinfulness and lack of interest in Him. The second thing we can learn about God is that He has both an attitude of entreaty and a willingness and desire to receive rebellious sinners into His favor. This is indicated by the notion of His stretching forth His hands.

This does not mean that God doesn't care about our attitude toward Him. Clearly, He wants us to submit ourselves to His authority and rule, and He wants us to commit to a way of life that pleases Him. But it also means that when we fail in our attempts to be who and what He wants us to be, He is patient and understanding of us, waiting for us to confess our sinfulness so He can restore our

fellowship with Him. This is all the more reason why we should be grateful to Him for his grace and His mercy.

### **So What?**

If you have recognized your sinful condition, having humbled yourself before the mighty hand of God, and having appealed to Him for the salvation that you don't deserve, then you now have an obligation to share this truth with others. Have you shared this message with someone else recently? Don't think it is someone else's responsibility to share the Gospel message. It's ours! We should be unashamed, even eager, to share the gospel message with those around us. And when we witness to the unsaved, we shouldn't be surprised if they reject our message and think of us as fools. Keep in mind, the real fool is the one who rejects God's free gift of salvation!

The fool has said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" (Psalms 14:1a and Psalms 53:1a)

The next time you are witnessing to someone and declaring the message of salvation through faith in the blood of Christ, remember that you are sharing gloriously good news that originated from God Himself. You may feel awkward, and others may call you a fool, but you are particularly beautiful in God's sight when you proclaim it, whether you are proclaiming it to a prospective child of God or to a fool.

Today when you walk outside, take a good look at God's handiwork and think about how foolish and ashamed those people who want to believe in evolution rather than creation are going to feel when they appear before their Creator and their Judge! They may ridicule us and call us fools, but we are to love them with God's love and tell them the glorious gospel message. Life is neither meaningless nor hopeless for those who believe God's truth, and it is undeniable.

Let us all take a word of caution from this. Do you know what God wants and expects from you? Do you know what He instructs us to be and to do? Do you read and study your Bible so you will understand God's plan for you? Do you know what God has in store for you and the future of mankind?

If you do, that's great! If you don't, why not? Do you want God to provoke you to anger like He did to Israel? Or will you listen to Him and be stirred to action?

Consider how many lazy Christians there are today? If you confront them about their liberal, watered-down theology, their blatant sinfulness, or their legalism, they deny what you say and attack you for not being more forgiving and loving or for not being more "inclusive" in your theology.

I would rather be called an "overly critical fundamental fanatic" when confronting ungodliness than to be well liked because of being willing to compromise on what the Bible says. How about you?

Just remember what our ultimate destination would have been if God hadn't been patient and merciful with us and, instead, had given us what we truly deserve! Thank you, God, for Your patience, Your mercy, and Your grace! Now give me the courage to go out and proclaim the Good News!

Let's pray