

(Romans) Romans 9:22-10:21

by Zac Poonen

The sovereignty of God is the key to understanding why some people are saved and others are not, and how to achieve righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 47:24

Topics: "Gospel Preaching", "Divine Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being sent by God to preach the gospel. He quotes Romans 10:15, which states that those who bring the good news are beautiful in the sight of God. The preacher warns that many people in full-time Christian work today were not sent by God and therefore lack His endorsement. He highlights the privilege and honor of sharing the message of salvation with others, stating that it is the greatest calling on earth. However, he acknowledges that not everyone will understand or respond to the good news.

Transcript

Let's turn today to Romans, chapter 9, verse 22. In our last four studies we were considering the great truth of God's sovereignty, His sovereignty over all people, circumstances, and everything that affects the lives of His children especially, and everyone else in the world. And in verse 22 it says, what if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.

The fact is that God patiently waits. His patience is mentioned here. Notice, He endures the disobedience of people for a long, long time before He punishes them.

We are not so patient. We rush into judging people, and we want them to be finished off immediately. But it says God, with much patience, endures for a long time vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.

And it's because we don't have the patience of God that we can't often explain why God takes a long time to punish people. We would wish that He would act immediately, but His patience is much longer than ours. That's part of His character.

And He did so. The reason why He's so patient is to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, that is us, whom He has prepared beforehand for glory. Once again you see the sovereign choice of God in preparing us beforehand for glory.

When it says in verse 22 about vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, it doesn't mean that God predestines people to hell. That's not the meaning. It means that vessels who violate God's laws, just like clay refusing to melt to get hardened by the sun, God endures with much patience people who finally violate His laws and suffer the consequences of their own disobedience.

They reap what they sow. But us He has called, verse 24, from among the Jews and from among Gentiles. And referring to us, it says in verse 25, this promise in Hosea, it says here about those who were not My people whom God calls My people.

And those who were not beloved He calls beloved. And in the place where it was said to them, you are not My people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. So this Old Testament prophecy, which refers, as far as Hosea was concerned, it referred only to Israel, the Holy Spirit takes here in Romans 9.25 and applies it to us, saying we are the true Israel now.

We are the people of God. And where it says they were not My people, you see we, the Gentiles, were not God's people at all for 1,500 years under the Old Covenant, are now called God's people. And those who are not beloved are now called beloved.

And those who are not God's people are now called sons of the living God. Speaking here about the sovereign choice of God again, this is the theme right through Romans chapter 9. It's God's sovereign choice that has made us His people. Understanding the sovereignty of God is a very important part of the Gospel message.

It solves a lot of problems in our lives. It delivers us from questioning God especially when He doesn't act as quickly as we expect Him to act. And verse 27, Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved.

Even though physical Israel is a vast multitude of people, millions of people, the number, he says, that's going to be saved from that crowd is only a very small remnant. And he quotes Isaiah to prove that. We could apply that to those who call themselves Christians today.

The mistake that people in Israel made in their time was to say, like John the Baptist said to them, you say we are the sons of Abraham, we are the children of Abraham, God won't forsake us. In the same way people say today, we're Christians, we go to church, we believe in Jesus Christ, God won't forsake us. But it's only a remnant out of the children of Abraham that were saved.

Only a remnant that responded to the message of the Gospel which Jesus and Paul preached. And it's only a remnant among even those who call themselves Christians today who respond to the Gospel message. Verse 28, for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth thoroughly and quickly.

We were mentioning earlier about the patience of God in verse 22, in enduring for a long time with people who rebelled and violated His laws and disobeyed. And here we read, coupled with that is also the truth that God will execute His word on the earth quickly and thoroughly. You can be sure of that.

That God, when He finally deals with people, it'll be a very quick job and it'll be a thorough job. We tend to act far too soon before we should. God waits.

But when He does act, He's going to be a very quick job and a thorough job. And then Isaiah says in verse 29, except the Lord of Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts, Lord of the armies of heaven, had left to us a posterity,

we would have become as Sodom. Sodom would have resembled Gomorrah.

Or as the Living Bible says, all Jews would have been destroyed, just as in Sodom and Gomorrah everyone perished if it were not for God's mercy. It's God's mercy that has also preserved a remnant for His name as a testimony in every part of the earth. All these verses that we've been considering right from Romans chapter 9 verse 1 up to here are all various aspects of God's sovereignty, so that man's pride is eliminated completely.

It's not something that we have done. God in His sovereign choice determined that there'll be a remnant to be a testimony for Him and you and I happen to be part of that remnant. We can take no credit for it at all.

We're not better than any other believer. There can be no spiritual pride, no competition, no jealousy in the heart of a man who has understood the sovereignty of God. And I want to say this to you, my dear friend, if you have any amount of spiritual pride in you, where you compare yourself with another believer, or you have a spirit of competition with another believer, or you're jealous of someone else, or you have a complaint against God or a question about His dealings, that is the clearest proof, the absolute clearest proof that you have not understood the truth that the Holy Spirit is trying to describe in Romans chapter 9. And that is why we have labored so long over this chapter, because this is one of the greatest truths that believers need to understand.

Imagine if you can understand something in Scripture that will permanently eliminate spiritual pride from your life, that will permanently eliminate jealousy, that will permanently eliminate a spirit of rebellion, that will permanently eliminate questioning God, that will permanently eliminate competition with other believers and a competitive spirit, that will permanently make you accept your boundaries in every area, your financial boundaries, your physical boundaries, your circumstances and everything. Something that will make you give thanks to God and that will make you humble and deeply grateful to God. Don't you think that's a good truth for us to be established in? Well that's the truth of Romans chapter 9, of the sovereignty of God.

All these problems that riddle the lives of so many believers can be eliminated if they understand one truth, the sovereign authority and rule of God over all creation, and that we cannot dictate to God how He should do His work. He does His work in wisdom that is a million times greater than ours, with patience that is a million times greater than ours, and with a thoroughness, finally, that is a million times better than ours. Praise God that we are children of such a God.

What shall we say then, at the end of it all? After this tremendous description of the sovereignty of God, He says finally, in Romans chapter 9 and verse 30, what shall we say at the end of it all? That the Gentiles, that's us, who did not pursue after righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith. But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Doesn't this look illogical and unfair, that people who pursue after righteousness don't arrive at it, and people who don't pursue after it arrive at it? The people who pursued did not arrive at it, and the people who did not pursue arrived at it.

The elder son who lived such a good life is outside the house in Luke chapter 15, and the younger son who lived such a bad life is inside the house in the story of the prodigal son. The Pharisees who lived such good external lives are outside the kingdom, and the thieves and the gamblers and the prostitutes who lived very wicked lives are finally inside the kingdom. Doesn't it look very, very unfair? That's God's way.

He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And we discover in all this that it is man's pride and arrogance that keeps him out of God's kingdom. Who are you, O man? Romans 9.20 is the question.

Who are you, O man, to question God? If you can humble yourself and say, Lord, I'm a nobody, you'll be saved, and you'll find a wonderful place in God's kingdom. But if you think you're big enough, smart enough, clever enough to question God's dealings, and that you can understand everything, you'll probably be outside the kingdom forever. Those who do not pursue after a law of righteousness arrive there, and those who pursue after it do not arrive.

Why? Verse 32. Why did they not arrive? Is it because God is against those who pursue after righteousness? No, not at all. It's because they did not pursue it by faith.

They pursued it by works. That's the problem. It's not that God is against those who pursue after righteousness.

It's not that God loves prostitutes and thieves, but does not love righteous people. Far from it. God is a God of righteousness, and He loves those who work righteousness.

Jesus was righteous. Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and so God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. But He's against those who are proud of their righteousness.

He's against those who are righteous and despise others. If you are righteous and you're proud of it, if you are righteous and you despise others, then God hates that. That's what makes a person a Pharisee and self-righteous.

So let's turn to God in humility. Today we turn to the concluding words of Romans chapter 9. Why did not Israel achieve righteousness even though they pursued after it? It's like asking why didn't the elder son end up in the story of the prodigal son sitting at the father's right hand? Why is it the younger son ended up there? Why is it the Pharisees missed the kingdom when prostitutes and tax collectors, cheating tax collectors, entered that kingdom? How could a thief dying on the cross enter into God's kingdom immediately when Pharisees, self-righteous Pharisees in the synagogue who read the Bible every week, miss it altogether? Because, the answer is very clear in Romans 9.32, they did not pursue it by faith. And anyone who seeks after righteousness by works today and by the works of the law will also miss righteousness.

Because no man is fit to be in God's presence. Every man's work is like filthy rags in God's eyes. We can enter God's presence only by faith in Jesus Christ having died for us on the cross and we accept that.

It requires a lot of humility to acknowledge that all my works are like filthy rags in God's eyes. I come empty handed, then I can receive righteousness. Otherwise I can never receive it.

So the sovereignty of God is made it such that man has to be humbled down to the dust. And every person who humbles himself to the dust and takes that low place will get tremendous grace from God. But any man who exalts himself will be humbled.

Verse 33, it says in the last part of verse 2, they stumbled over the stumbling stone. And that stumbling stone was Jesus Christ. Like it is written, behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.

One thing is clear, those who trust God will never be disappointed. Anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ, I don't care what area it is, if you trust in the Lord, I can give you one assurance today, you will never never be disappointed in your life. If something is something that God has promised in his word and you trust him, it may take time for the answer to come, but you can be sure of one thing, it will definitely come.

You will never be disappointed. Are you trusting God for something today which is promised in God's word? Here is a promise. Romans 9.33, he who believes in Christ will not be disappointed.

If on the other hand you're trusting God for something you desire, covet. You want yourself. The tenth commandment is that you shall not desire things that belong to others.

Sometimes we long for material things which we see other people have. That is actually a sin. We're not to covet, we're to be satisfied with what God has given us.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. What we should long for is for spiritual riches. Instead of that, if we long for material things and you trust in the Lord, you will be disappointed.

Those who long to become rich instead of getting blessings from God will pierce themselves through with many sorrows, it says in 1 Timothy 6. But if you are desiring for something that God has promised in his word, your food, your clothing, your earthly necessities and your spiritual necessities, everything pertaining to life and godliness, God has promised it and you will never never be disappointed. You can trust him. He will not let you down.

He is not a disappointment. You can be sure of that. Just like he saved you when you didn't deserve to be saved, just like he sent his son even when you didn't ask him to send his son to earth, he will provide your need.

You can be sure of that. In chapter 10, God, Paul deals with the subject of God's righteousness again. He continues on the same theme.

Again he says, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is their salvation. He had a great burden that Israel should be saved. He says they have a great zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge.

And this verse could also be applied to a lot of Christians. A lot of Christians who have a lot of zeal but it's not according to Scripture. It's not according to knowledge.

These Israelites, he says in verse 3, not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. You know, a proud person can go around trying to establish his own righteousness. Even the Christian world, there are a lot of people who are trying to prove that they are right.

There are a lot of disputes among Christians where each person is trying to prove he's right and the other person is wrong. And very often they get into the trap of the devil who is the accuser of the brethren and they go around accusing others. And that's dangerous because when you get into the business of accusing others, you're in hand-in-glove with Satan.

You're in fellowship with the accuser of the brethren, trying to prove that you're right. Jesus spoke a lot against the Pharisees for trying to justify themselves. He said in Luke chapter 16 and verse 15, you are those who justify yourself in the sight of men, but God detests that.

Do you know that God detests self-justification? But God values those who humble themselves. God values those who say, Lord, I'm guilty. That's what the thief on the cross said.

I'm wrong. Please forgive me. Have mercy on me.

And he was forgiven immediately. But the Pharisees who tried to give an explanation for everything they ever did, they missed out on God's kingdom altogether. This is God's way in the New Covenant.

Humble yourself. Acknowledge your guilt. Admit that you're wrong.

Admit that your righteousness is like filthy rags in God's eyes. And God's righteousness becomes yours. God comes on your side.

God is never on the side of those who justify themselves and accuse others. God is on the side of those who humble themselves. Always humble yourself.

It says in Romans 10 and verse 4, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Salvation is by faith. And as far as the law is concerned, it's finished.

Christ is the end of the law. The law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, we read in Galatians 3. And once the schoolmaster has led us to Christ, he's got no more control over us. He's finished with us.

Now Jesus has taken over. And so we say here, Christ, so we read here, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. And then he quotes Moses.

Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by that righteousness. You have a choice now. You can either live under law or live in union with Christ.

If you choose to live under the law, choose to live by your own works, well, then you've got to keep everything that the law says. And you can live by that. But there's not a soul under the sun that can ever manage that.

That's why God made a way of salvation by which all men could be saved. The good person and the bad person. The bad person described in Romans 1 and the good person described in Romans 2 are both coming short of God's standards.

And God made a way by which both of them could be saved through Christ. So don't ever glory in your own works of righteousness, even after you've become a believer. Acknowledge everything as the result of God's mercy and grace upon your life.

Romans 10 verse 6, it says, the righteousness based on faith is so completely different from the righteousness based on law. Righteousness based on law can make a man proud. That's why the elder son was proud in that parable when he compared himself with the prodigal younger brother.

That's why the Pharisees were proud when they compared themselves with the common people who didn't know the law like they did, or when they compared themselves with tax collectors and prostitutes. But the righteousness based on faith is different. When a man is saved by faith, he has no more pride left in him.

That's one proof of salvation by faith. That's one proof of whether you've got the righteousness of faith or the righteousness of the law. There will be no more pride left in you.

The righteousness based on faith says, don't say in your heart who will ascend to heaven to bring Christ down, or who will descend to the abyss to bring Christ up from the dead. The righteousness based on faith believes that Christ came down from heaven and Christ rose up from the dead. What does the righteousness based on faith say? He's quoting Moses from the Old Testament.

The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. And he quotes that Old Testament verse and says that refers to the word of faith that we are preaching. Hidden in these Old Testament statements of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy is a prophecy of the New Testament faith.

The word of faith. Now who would have ever thought when they read Deuteronomy, these verses that Paul is quoting here, that they refer to the word of faith being now preached. But he says that is true.

This word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. That's what Moses said. And he says that is the word of faith we are preaching.

And that is, with our mouth we must confess Jesus Christ as Lord and believe in our hearts that God has raised him from the dead. This word which is near you, Romans 10 verse 8, in your mouth and in your heart refers to our believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth. It's like the two wires in electricity.

When those two wires join at a switch, the light comes on. You know all that a switch does is make two wires touch. As soon as the two wires touch, the light comes on.

Otherwise they can be very close to each other and there's no light. It's the same here. We must believe in our heart.

That's one wire. And the other is we must confess with our mouth. What do we believe in our heart? We believe in our heart that God raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.

What do we confess with our mouth? That Jesus Christ is now my Lord. Have you confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord? Do you believe that God raised up Jesus from the dead? Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important? Because that is the proof God gave that your sins have been taken care of. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, I'd have no proof that my sins have been taken care of.

But now I do. My sins have been taken care of completely because God raised up Jesus from the dead. My sins are forgiven.

I believe that in my heart. And because I believe that, I'm righteous because I confess it. Verse 10, I'm saved.

Let's turn today to Romans chapter 10 and verse 9. We were looking at this verse. Salvation comes not just by believing in our heart, but also by confessing with our mouth. There's a lot of emphasis on belief.

That's important. There also needs to be an emphasis on repentance. It's no use believing if we don't turn from our sin.

And here, just like repentance and faith are linked together in the acts of the apostles frequently, here we find faith in our heart and confession with our mouth are linked together in Romans chapter 10 verse 9 and

10. What are we to confess with our mouth? Nowadays there's a lot of emphasis in certain circles in Christendom on the confession of our mouth. They say believe in your heart and confess with your mouth.

But very often the emphasis is on something material. They say confess that you'll get a new house or a new car or that you'll be healed. But that is not what Paul is speaking about at all.

That is a perversion of what Scripture is speaking about here. Scripture is speaking here about salvation. And we must not misquote Scripture and apply it to something that will not work.

Many people are disappointed when they confess something and they don't get it. But here it says in Romans 10 and verse 11, whoever believes in him will never be disappointed. If you go according to Scripture, you can be sure of one thing.

You will never be disappointed in your entire life. If you listen to the preaching of some man who tries to brainwash you with his doctrine or his testimony, you may be disappointed all your life. There are thousands and millions of believers in the world today who are disappointed because they listen to human arguments and to the preaching of men who were only after their money.

But those who trust in the Lord and go by Scripture will never in their entire life be disappointed even in a single area. What are we to believe in our heart? Is it to get a new car or a new house or for healing? No. We're to believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Verse 9. Let's stick to Scripture and let's not add to Scripture. Let's not twist Scripture like a lot of people do. What are we to confess with our mouth? Are we to confess with our mouth our healing? Are we to confess with our mouth that I'm going to get this or I'm going to get that and I'm going to get that? No.

We're not to confess anything concerning what we're going to get. We're going to confess what is absolutely true, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Romans 10 verse 9. So once we stick to what Scripture says, we'll never be disappointed.

Do you believe in your heart that your sins were dealt with? That your old man was crucified? That you've been raised up with Christ as a new man when God raised Jesus up from the dead as we read in Romans 6? God raised up Jesus from the dead. Do you believe that? That your sins were dealt with finally on the cross? Okay. Do you acknowledge today that Jesus Christ is Lord of this universe? All authority in heaven and earth belongs to Him.

It doesn't matter what anybody says or thinks. Jesus Christ is Lord. Do you confess that with your mouth? If you do, here is God's promise.

You will never in your entire life be disappointed. He'll never let you down. You will have salvation.

Because, verse 10, with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness. God's righteousness is put to your account. And with the mouth, when you confess, it results in salvation.

Many things that bind you, that prevent you from experiencing salvation. And salvation means more than merely being saved from hell. Salvation means freedom from sin's power.

The first promise in the New Testament is Jesus Christ will save his people from their sins. The very first time that the word salvation comes in the New Testament is not in relation to hell. It's in relation to sin.

Jesus came not even to heal our bodies. He came to save his people from their sins. That's the salvation spoken of in Romans 10.

Do you want to be saved from sin? Do you believe that God dealt with the sin problem completely on the cross? Not only forgiveness of our sins, as described in Romans 3, but our old man, the source and the root of sin, as described in Romans 6. And God raised up Jesus from the dead, and you've been raised up with him. Do you believe that? Will you confess now that Jesus Christ is Lord? You can be saved. And when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord with our mouth, we are saying that Jesus Christ is Lord of my life.

Here is the reason why many people do not experience a complete salvation from fear, anxiety, tension, anger, lustful thoughts, bitterness, jealousy, the effects of black magic, witchcraft, strife, name it, whatever sin and evil there is in the world. We can be saved from evil. We can be saved from sin.

If you will believe in your heart that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and you confess with your mouth the reality, Jesus Christ is Lord of your life. Let's just examine that for a moment. Is Jesus Christ really Lord of your life? Have you given all your money to him? Have you given your ambitions, your plans, your future, everything to him? Have you given your marriage plans up to him? Have you allowed him to become ruler of your life and to control everything? Can Jesus Christ have the power to stop you from replying angrily when you want to? Are you willing to give up your will? He'll give you the power.

He'll give you the ability. What I'm asking is, are you willing? Are you willing to let Jesus Christ be Lord of your life? Do you confess him as Lord? I don't mean hypocritically. God has already made Jesus Lord.

What about you? You can be saved if you confess Jesus as Lord. That's the plain meaning of Romans chapter 10 verse 9 and 10. And when you do that, let me give you this assurance, my dear friend.

Anyone listening to me today, if you confess Jesus Christ as Lord really and not hypocritically over every area of your life, your financial life, your ambitions, your plans, your desires, your lusts, everything, you confess Jesus Christ as Lord. That means you have no desire anymore to do your own will but to do the will of God to please him and to glorify him. Let me give you the promise of Scripture.

Whoever, it doesn't matter who you are, you will not be disappointed in your life at all. You'll find God working mightily. But if you're just a religious person fasting and praying and reading the Bible and you don't make Jesus Lord, you will be disappointed.

Here it's not talking about religious activities like fasting and prayer. There's a lot of emphasis nowadays on fasting and prayer. And a lot of people are fasting and praying who don't make Jesus Lord of their life.

It's far better to make Jesus Lord of your life and fast and pray less than to fast and pray a lot and not make Jesus Lord of your life. What is fundamental? Jesus must be Lord of your life, of your family life, of your finances, of your ambitions, your plans, and every area of your life. You will be saved.

You will experience salvation. You confess with your mouth, it says in verse 10, it leads to salvation and you'll never be disappointed. Do you know it's God's will for you that you should live a life where you're never disappointed? Verse 12 says there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon him.

All the wealth of heaven is at your disposal if you will call upon him as Lord of all. Notice the emphasis again in verse 12. Lord of everything.

Have you made him Lord of everything? Do you confess him as Lord of everything? If not, no wonder you're disappointed. No wonder you haven't experienced a full salvation. Why not make him Lord now? All his riches are at your disposal.

Abounding in riches, it says. What riches? He doesn't make his children the wealthiest people financially on earth. It's obviously spiritual riches.

Peter said silver and gold have I none. Paul was poor. Jesus was poor.

And God's greatest saints throughout 2,000 years of church history have been poor. But they have abounded in spiritual wealth because they made Jesus Lord. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Call upon him as Lord, not just as savior. When you call upon Jesus, say, Lord Jesus, you are Lord of my life. You will be saved from everything that's contrary to the will of God in your life.

Is there something happening in your life that's contrary to God's will? Is there some sin you're bound to? Contrary to God's will, you can be saved. Call upon the name of Jesus as Lord of your life. You will be saved.

He goes on in the remaining verses to speak about the wonderful privilege we have to preach the gospel. How shall they call on him whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach unless they're sent? Just as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things. What you've been hearing right now is the gospel.

Glad tidings of good things that you'll never be disappointed in your life. You can be saved from everything evil that has ruined your life and your family life. Isn't that a good news? Well, you've heard it now.

Now you've got to believe it. How shall they believe without hearing? And now you've heard. God has sent me to preach, and you've heard.

Now believe, and this can be yours. Confess Jesus Christ as Lord of your life, and say, Lord, your riches are mine, and you will find the reality of these promises in your life as well. Let's turn today to Romans chapter 10, verse 15.

He's speaking here about the tremendous privilege it is to preach this good news. He says, how shall they preach this wonderful message of salvation unless they've been sent? See, we have no right to preach the gospel unless God has sent us. If God has saved you, He desires that you give your testimony to others.

God sends you to this world. He is the one who initiates the ministry. How shall they preach unless they are sent? There are a lot of people in full-time Christian work today who were never sent by God.

They've gone out to preach, but God has not sent them. And when God doesn't send you, He will not bear witness to your ministry. If you go yourself, you decide where to go, what to do.

Well, you're responsible for yourself. But if God sent you, you can be sure He'll back you up. He will confirm your word.

He will stand by you. He'll provide your need. And He will endorse your ministry in many, many, many ways.

He will attest your ministry. But you have to be sent. How shall they preach unless they are sent? And this is the greatest calling there is on the face of the earth, because it says how beautiful are the feet of those who bring this gospel of good tidings, of peace.

There is no greater calling that a man can have on the face of the earth. And if God calls you with this calling, you can be pretty sure that's the greatest honor that any human being on earth can ever have, to share the good news of salvation with other people. There's no greater job any man can have on the face of the earth, not even to be the president of a country.

But when you bring this good tidings to others, you may be disappointed to see that a lot of people don't understand it as good tidings. There's a lot of opposition. And He says this is not new, because even in the Old Testament, Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report? And it's very interesting that that verse comes at the beginning of Isaiah chapter 53, the chapter about the cross, the chapter about Jesus dying for our sins, the iniquity of us all being laid upon Him, of Him being led as a sheep to the slaughter for our sins.

At the beginning of the chapter, we read this sentence, Lord, who has believed our report? This wonderful news of the gospel, which one would think everybody in the world should just jump to receive it. But the fact of the matter is, hardly anybody believes. Who has believed it? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

Faith is a gift of God. And if you have had faith to believe this wonderful message of the gospel, humble yourself and acknowledge, Lord, this is your mercy that I believe. There are a lot of people in the world who've heard it, who've not believed it, and who don't enjoy it.

I enjoy it today because I believe. But coming down to verse 17, remember this, that faith can never come without hearing what God has to say. Faith does not come by hearing a man's testimony.

Unfortunately, very often today, a lot of people's faith is based on the testimony they have heard somebody else give. Somebody else prayed and trusted God for something and got something. And you hear that testimony, and you say, well, I'm also going to trust God for the same thing.

But you may not get it, and you're disappointed. But here it says that those who believe in him, Romans 10, 11, will never be disappointed. Do you want a faith with which you'll never be disappointed? Then let your faith rest not on the testimony of men, but on the Word of Christ.

See, that's the important thing. Romans 10, 17. Faith comes from hearing.

Hearing what? Not the testimony of believers, but the Word of Christ. What God did for that believer may be his will for that believer. And if you depend on that, and say, Lord, you do for me what you did for him, well, that may not be God's will for you.

God made Paul an apostle. And supposing you say, well, I want to be an apostle too. You may never be an apostle.

That's not God's calling for you, perhaps. If that is God's calling for you, he will make you an apostle. That's just an example.

Look for a promise in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament. The Word of Christ mentioned here in verse 17 refers to the New Testament Scriptures. The Word of Christ.

The whole Bible is the Word of God, but the New Testament is particularly the Word of the Messiah, the Word of Jesus Christ. And if you can find a promise in Scripture in the New Testament, and trust it, if it's for you, you can be absolutely sure it will be fulfilled. You'll never be disappointed.

So make it a rule in your life that your faith will be based not on the testimony of men, but on the Word of Jesus Christ. A lot of disappointment among believers is because they have expected God to do for them the same miracle he did for somebody else, usually in the physical, material realm. But the Word of Christ will always be fulfilled.

You can trust it. And if you don't have the habit of reading and meditating on the Word of Christ, then you don't know what God is saying. You must allow God to speak to you through his Word.

Only then can faith be born in your heart. Faith comes as you read God's Word, particularly in the New Testament, and meditate on it, and let God speak through it to your heart, and then faith will be born in your heart. The only way for faith to grow is by meditating more and more on the Word of Christ.

Further, in verse 18, For I say, Surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have. Their voice has gone out, this is a quotation from the Old Testament, their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the earth. And I say, Surely, Israel did not know, did they? At the first, Moses says, I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I anger you.

Now this is quite amazing, that when God finds a group of people that are just taking advantage of His goodness and advantage of His Word, and thinking that they are the only ones whom God will ever use or bless, He bypasses them completely and chooses another group of people, whom the first group thinks that God would never choose or bless. And when they see that God has chosen and blessed this other group, they become jealous. That's what's mentioned in verse 19 of Romans 10.

I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation. See, the Jews consider Gentiles as not even a nation. They say, We are the only nation whom God has chosen.

Where is the question of anybody else? It's just us. They are not even nations. And God picks up those people whom the Israelites considered as not even a nation, and not only chooses them, but blesses them abundantly and bypasses Israel altogether.

And Israel is provoked to jealousy by a nation without understanding. The Jews looked at the people of the other nations and said, They don't have any understanding of God's Word. But when they see God blessing them mightily, they get angry.

The Jews were angry whenever Paul preached and people in the synagogue responded and were saved and people were healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. It made the Jews angry. It made them jealous.

Jealousy and anger always go together. You remember with Cain? Cain was jealous of God blessing Abel, and he was angry with Abel and killed him. The Jews, the Pharisees were jealous of Jesus and were angry with him and killed him.

The Jews were jealous of Paul and were angry with him and were constantly persecuting him. And when people see God blessing you, they'll be jealous of you too, and be angry with you and persecute you in one way or the other. But that won't hinder God's purposes through you any more than God's purposes are hindered in Jesus or in Paul.

God's purposes are fulfilled in Jesus and in Paul, and they'll be fulfilled in you too. You don't have to be afraid. But I want you to notice something here.

The principle that we see operating here between Israel and the Gentiles of jealousy and anger in Israel, we find it's also repeated in a lot of groups in Christendom. God raises up a group sometimes in Christendom because the rest of Christendom has declined spiritually and gone away from His Word and the standards of His Word. And God raises up a group, usually through a man, through a man of God, He raises up a group to stand for His truth.

And in the lifetime of that man, that truth is proclaimed clearly, and a lot of people respond to that truth. A number of people, usually a small remnant compared to the vast majority of Christendom, respond to that truth and yield to it, and a little group is formed. And that becomes a wonderful church.

But usually what happens after that man, the leader, dies, this group begins to decline. They become proud, just like the Jews. Moses and Joshua raised them up, David raised them up, but they became proud.

And then God bypasses them completely, just like He bypassed the Jews. And He goes to the Gentiles. And you may find that some group that you despise is the one that God has gone to now.

And that's the one God is choosing. And God is blessing. What should you do when you see that? It's no use being jealous, it's no use being angry, it's no use accusing them, criticizing them and all that.

Yeah, they may be having some doctrines which are a bit wrong, but they've got a heart which is better than yours, and so God blesses them. So often we think God looks only at doctrine. He looks more than doctrine.

He looks at people's hearts. And what about the Jews? Isaiah says concerning those Gentiles, I was found by those who sought me not. I became manifest to those who did not ask for me like those Gentiles.

But as for Israel, he says all day long, verse 21, I have stretched out my hand to a disobedient and obstinate people. That has been repeated in Christendom. Groups that were once blessed by God have become arrogant and proud and have become disobedient to God today and obstinate.

And God is blessing those others who did not seek Him like you sought Him. He's manifested Himself to those who did not seek for Him. This is God's way.

He loves to manifest Himself to the humble, broken heart. God is near those who are broken of heart. So let's remain in brokenness and humility all our days.

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