

May 3, 2020

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

Passage: Romans 10:5-21

Community Group Questions: “The Gospel Within Reach”

Background: In this passage, Paul continues to wrestle with the question: “Why are so many Israelites rejecting the gospel? Have God’s promises to Israel failed?” He continues to explore the topic, looking at Israel’s responsibility in the matter: Israel has willingly rejected God’s good gospel. Read Romans 10:5-21 aloud as a group and then work through the following questions:

1. In verses 5-10, Paul quotes Moses’ words to Israel in Deuteronomy 30:11-14. In that passage, Moses says that God’s instructions for Israel are not so far off and difficult that they have to go up into heaven or across the sea to find out what God wants. No, God’s instructions are as close as their mouth and their heart. Paul applies these words to the gospel: the gospel is not far away, obscure, and difficult, so that we have to go up into heaven to bring Christ down to us, or go down into the grave to bring Christ up to us, but rather, the gospel is easily accessible! One must believe in their heart (faith) and give expression to that belief with their mouth (confess) that Jesus is our risen Savior and Lord, and they will be saved. In your opinion, why has God made his gospel so accessible? Why not require rules, rituals, initiation ceremonies, or probation periods before someone can be saved? Why do people so often add hurdles and barriers to faith in Christ, and why is it so easy to do so?
2. Verses 11-13 quote Isaiah 28:16 and Joel 2:32 to show that everyone, without distinction, is able to call upon the name of the Lord in the same way: by faith. The gospel is accessible to all, regardless of race, age, or socio-economic background. It’s available to women and men, rich and poor, simple and sophisticated. In a world so divided over class, race, and politics, how does the gospel uniquely equip Christians to pursue and model reconciliation and peace?
3. In verses 14-18, Paul insists that the Israelites in his day had heard the gospel, and therefore, they had no excuse. In making that point, Paul explains the “mechanics” of how the gospel advanced: Jesus and his church sends; Christians go and preach; people hear, and they believe, and they call on the Lord and are saved. What do these verses teach about the importance of verbally sharing, and preaching, and persuading, when it comes to spreading the gospel? Do you agree with the saying, “Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words?” Why or why not? Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:7, to say that the feet of those who go and preach the good news are beautiful. How does this passage motivate us as a church to support global and local missions, as well as everyday evangelism?
4. In verses 19-21, Paul says that Israel could not plead ignorance, because the gospel is understandable. The gospel is not simplistic, but it is simple: God is reconciling sinners to himself through the saving work of his Son, Jesus Christ. It is a message a child can grasp, and it’s a message that brilliant intellectuals can grasp. It is understandable for everyone who hears! Have you found that to be true? In what ways can we communicate the gospel in understandable ways for our culture today?

Prayer suggestion: Pray for anyone in your sphere of influence who has not heard, or believed, the gospel. Pray for opportunities to clearly and winsomely share the good news. Pray that God would open people's hearts to believe.