
"How to Reach the Unreached "
(Romans 10:8-15)
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⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Today is a very important day in the history of our church. As a church we are adopting the peoples of Bihar India. You'll hear a bit more about our church's history with missions a bit later. But what exactly does that mean, to adopt a people group? To some that phrase might have tones of western imperialism and we would frown upon that in our current global village. To others that might carry the dangers of presumption of the haves going to the have-nots, the rich going to the poor offering handouts. The reason we might have these ideas is because of what western nations did in previous centuries colonizing many parts of the world. But neither of these would be close to why we are doing what we are doing.

People group adoption is when a church commits before God to serve an unreached people group or an unreached area of the world with the Gospel. It's doing our part in fulfilling God's mandate, that's stated in the Lausanne Covenant. "The whole church taking the whole Gospel into the whole world."

There are many reasons why we are doing this, and all of them come from the Scriptures. This was the pattern of the New Testament. When we track the movements of the missionary Paul and his companions, we can observe that he always went to unreached cities and peoples. You might say, well, wasn't the entire world unreached at that time? And the answer is yes, but when you look at Paul's three missionary journeys, he didn't just return to the same cities during the 2nd and 3rd journeys. Rather, with each subsequent journey he expanded into new territory. And when we look at Romans 15, Paul tells us explicitly his missionary strategy. Listen to what he says.

²⁰ It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. **(Romans 15:20)**

Paul understands that his calling is to take the Gospel to peoples and cities and countries where the Gospel is not known. This is why our church has been so involved in taking the Gospel to the unreached and this is why we are doing this adoption ceremony today.

But, you might ask why? Why did Paul do this? Why did Paul make this his holy ambition? The answer to that question is found in Romans 10. Paul had some core convictions that led him take the road less traveled, the path of suffering for the nations. What were they?

First, Paul believed that people without God and without a Savior will go to hell. How do we know that? Well, verse 9 says, If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. In verse 10 he says, For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Verse 13 says, for “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Three times Paul states that they will be saved. Saved from what? Saved from God’s judgment. Saved from God’s wrath. Saved from a God-less eternity. Saved from hell. God’s judgment is real, hell is real and real people will be judged by God and sent there. This reality implies that people need to be saved. We must never forget that the greatest threat to mankind is not nuclear war or famine or natural disasters. As awful as all of those things are, they pale in comparison to God’s holy and terrible judgment, when he sentences and sends people, for all eternity, to hell. Well that’s the first thing he believes.

Here’s the second thing that Paul believes that takes him to the unreached. He believes that God has provided a Savior. In verse 9 Paul says, If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raise him from the dead, you will be saved.” God did not merely provide a method—3 steps to a better life—no, he provided an person to be our savior. What does Paul believe about this Saviour? Oh boy so much. How shall we summarize?

1. The savior that God provided was both divine and human. Why was that the case? Why did he have to be both divine and human? If I can summarize the theologian and bishop Augustine, he said something like this. The savior, the mediator had to be divine because it was God, a divine being, that sinful humans had offended. But the Savior also had to be human to perfectly represent the humans who needed to be reconciled to God. In Jesus we have the perfect savior. He’s the God-man.
2. Paul also understood that this Savior was sufficient. Paul taught us that Jesus, when he died on the cross and rose again from the grave, actually and fully paid the penalty for those he came to save, his elect. There was nothing more Jesus could do, to add to what he had already done. This then means that there is nothing we could do, to add or contribute to what Jesus did on the cross for us. His sacrifice was sufficient to save.
3. Paul understood that this Savior was exclusive. Paul reiterates what Jesus himself said. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Paul tells us in his first letter to Timothy, “There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.” In Acts 4 the Apostle Peter said, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

There is no other god or religion or way of life or trying to be good or life philosophy that will save people. God has provided the only way, through a savior, when he gave us his own Son, Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins and rose again to life.

Here's the last thing that Paul believed that drives him to reach the unreached. Unless people hear with their own ears this message that we call the Gospel, the good news, that your sins can be forgiven, that you can escape judgment and hell and go to heaven, that you can be received into God's family, that you can experience true peace and joy, that you can get a new identity and purpose, that you can begin living the life you were supposed to live...unless people hear this message with their own ears and are given a chance to understand and respond to it, and only when they hear, can they be saved.

In verse 14 Paul writes, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!""

Let's use the remaining time to unpack Paul's argument. Here's how it goes:

1. Paul is teaching us that if a person wants to be saved, they have to call on the name of Jesus—they have to call out to the Savior.
2. But in order to call out to someone, you have to believe in that person. In other words, if they don't even know that this savior has come, or this salvation is possible or that they even need saving, how then would they call upon this savior? Before they call, they need to first believe in him.
3. Then Paul says, "but how could they believe in this savior if they've never heard of him?" It would be impossible. They need to hear of him first.
4. That means that someone has to preach to them. Why preaching? Preaching is proclamation. And good news is deserving of proclamation. If there's a great event that happens, it's proclaimed. Cancer cure discovered! War is over! Jesus died for your sins! These things are worthy of being preached and proclaimed!
5. But how can someone preach to them unless a preacher is sent? A real flesh and bones, living, breathing human being has to physically go and do this. They must be sent, which means they must be challenged to go, invited to go, commanded to go to take the Gospel to the nations.

If we take these five steps and look at them in reverse order it would look like this:

1. The church sends messengers/preachers/proclaimers to go to the nations, to the unreached to preach the good news of Jesus Christ.
2. They preach Jesus so that the unreached would hear about Jesus.
3. The unreached hear about Jesus so they can believe in Jesus.
4. They believe in Jesus in order to call upon Jesus
5. When they call upon Jesus they will be saved.

This is why Paul is so set on going to the unreached, because there is no other way.

Bihar

There are 17,000 people groups in the world.

7000 of them are considered unreached.

That means that of the 7.5 billion people on the planet, 3.1 billion are unreached. Most of them are found within the 10-40 window spanning from western Africa to the Far East.

According to the Joshua Project website, in the state of Bihar alone there are 451 people groups of which 424 are considered unreached. Of the 113.5 million population only 0.1 percent are considered Christian. That's just 113,500 people that are Christian, including Catholics.

Compare that to Canada which is 1/3 the population of Bihar. We have 36.5 million people. Being such a diverse nation we have 273 people groups. 73.6% have a Christian affiliation. 50 of our 273 people groups are considered unreached. And the percentage that's unreached is only 4.4% of the total population. The unreached in Canada are primarily immigrants who came from unreached countries.

Let's continue the comparison.

- 74% Christian in Canada vs. .1% in Bihar.
- 27 million Christian in Canada vs. 113,500 in Bihar.

It's staggering isn't it? How could any church in Canada not care about missions, and ignore the unreached? Church, as we adopt Bihar today we are devoting ourselves to pray, to pray without ceasing for Bihar. As we have prayed for Kyrgyzstan for over 20 years now, and we've prayed for Cambodia for over 10 years, we add to that our precious and powerful prayers for the work of the Gospel in Bihar.

Church, as we adopt Bihar today we are devoting ourselves to give our financial resources to missions. That's why we've been talking about money all month. Let's be a church and people that will have less, so others could have more.

Church, as we adopt Bihar today we are devoting ourselves to go—to go short term, midterm and long term and to support those who are already there. A life dedicated for the unreached is not a wasted life, it's one of the most precious lives you can live. One life dedicated to God can make a huge difference.

There is a hell, a real judgment.

There is a savior, a real way to be saved.

There is a way, messengers who will go and tell people how they can be saved.

As Paul said, How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" **(10:14)**

Let's pray.