



+ **YOU**

Summer 2023
Set Apart: A Life Lived for God

Sermon Title: Bridging the Gap
To be used with Session 3: Set Apart but Not Alone
Scripture: Romans 10:14-17

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “Set Apart but Not Alone” this sermon connects the passage—particularly 2 Corinthians 2:14: “But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually”—with the critical importance of and need for personal evangelism.

Introduction: One of the most encouraging verses in the Bible is Romans 10:13: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Everyone! We know that, unfortunately, not everyone is saved. As Jesus taught in Luke 16:19-31, there is an eternal gap between those in heaven and those in the lake of fire. But that gap is faced by every person in this life and is only bridged by believing in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31). In today’s passage, Paul placed a great emphasis on our responsibility to proclaim the message to those on the other side of the gap.

1. The Gap Is Real (Rom. 10:14)

A gap of believing. “Call on” is used in verses 13 and 14 with the sense of invoking and/or worshipping as well as a sense of appealing to (for salvation). Whether or not a person believes a parachute could save him if he jumps from an airplane at 10,000 feet is not important—unless the person is going to jump from an airplane at 10,000 feet. In such a case, believing is critical or the person might not depend on the parachute to save him.

A gap of knowing. Darren Harrison had never flown an airplane until the pilot of the plane in which he was a passenger became incapacitated. Then Robert Morgan, an air traffic controller and certified flight instructor began talking to Harrison, guiding him until he landed the plane safely. The information Harrison received from Morgan gave him the confidence to safely land the plane with no fatalities and get home to his pregnant wife.¹ When it comes to salvation, few people know to look to Christ. We can be their “flight instructor,” pointing them to Jesus.

A gap of communicating. The well-known fact that sound does not travel in a vacuum is more than just a physical property. Likewise, the message about Jesus will not be heard unless it is proclaimed. In this context, “preacher/preach” is not a title or job description reserved for the pastor. All who have experienced God’s grace have a responsibility to proclaim it under the

¹ cnn.com/travel/article/florida-passenger-lands-plane/index.html

guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts and convinces the hearer of the truth of what we proclaim. “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come” (John 16:13).

2. Attacking the Gap (Rom. 10:15-16)

Providing the support. The nature of the church mandates a recognition that we are all parts of one body in which each member does his or her part (Eph. 4:16). There are no “lone rangers.” The work of one is linked to the work of the rest. Regarding the first question of verse 15, “must be sent; the proclamation presupposes a commission.”² The implied commissioning is not a “good bye and good luck.” It warrants ongoing support of prayer, material/finances, and presence.

Honoring the worker. This statement is a reminder that God’s pleasure rests on those who tell others about His redemptive grace, and it is not singling out those who carry the title pastor or preacher.

Acknowledging the loss. The Old and New Testaments combine in acknowledging the sad truth that there are many who reject the message as evidenced in John 12:37-43. The focus of the passage, however, is on those who will believe. It is not our job to decide who will and who will not but to “be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

3. Anchoring the Bridge (Rom. 10:17)

On October 17, 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake caused a section of the top level of the double-decker Cypress Freeway Viaduct, built in the 1950’s, to collapse onto the lower level, causing 42 deaths.³ Manmade bridges are bound to have flaws and limited lifespans. We can rejoice that the bridge between eternal life and death has been made by God and will stand up to any and every obstacle providing the person chooses to believe and cross that bridge.

The strength one needs to be saved is faith. Faith is all the muscle we need to be saved. The lost respond to the message of salvation by faith. The source of that strength is not our own efforts or worth. It is all a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9).

Conclusion: Often overlooked, perhaps the greatest witness we have to the world about Jesus is our unity in Christ. Before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, Jesus spent His last hours in prayer (John 17). Such a time of pleading with the Father would be spent on the most vital and pressing matters. He prayed for Himself, then He prayed for the disciples, and then He prayed for those of us who would follow Him. Before closing this prayer, He prayed for our unity “so that the world may believe you sent me” (John 17:21) and “that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me” (v. 23). Before

² James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 38B (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 629.

³ cnn.com/2018/03/15/us/bridge-collapse-history-trnd/index.html and sfist.com/2014/10/15/loma_prieta_25_years_later_harrowin/

you leave this service, is there anyone here with which you do not have Christian unity? How do you achieve this unity?

We want others to see things our way, to conform to our point of view, to agree with us. When I am that way, it is about me and when it is about me, I have already rejected unity. Jesus taught us to love one another as He has extended love for us. That love is not a love of emotion but of esteeming others, of placing their needs above our own, about doing for them without anticipating or expecting anything in return. Jesus closed that prayer in John 17 with “so that the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them.” (v. 26) Are you ready to preach the message with your life, with God’s love in you? Are you willing to seek forgiveness, reconciliation, and true fellowship with the rest of God’s family?

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