

Reaching Our World – Rom 10:12-17

It's good to be back and worship with you; Becky and I had the opportunity to visit Harvest KC and Harvest North Indy the past two weekends . . .
And were blessed to do so; But it made me all the more thankful for our church, and all that God is doing around here

Which includes, but certainly isn't limited to, the fruit he's bearing through our Outreach Ministries – something we've been focusing on the past month (**Review**)
And just to refresh your memory, we started with **Loving Your Neighbor** – blessing those around our home base, work place, and third space
And then, Pastor Doug preached about **Engaging Your City** – from learning about it to living in it; And I can't wait to see the fruit of that

And then, last week, we had 3 of our church planters here to share how God has been **Impacting Our Nation**
And I want to say thank you to those of you who not only loved on *them*, but wrote a word of encouragement to *another* Pastor in our Fellowship
What a massive blessing that will be

- All of which brings us to our *final* message in this series, titled **Reaching Our World**
And to see some of what God has to say about it – turn with me to Rom 10:12-17 (**title**)

In the previous verses, the Apostle Paul has been explaining the gospel, telling us how to embrace it, and declaring that it's for everyone; Saying in v12 . . .
For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. [13] For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Second only to the glory of God, this is the reason for reaching our world – that people who are disconnected from God, will call on Jesus to be saved
Following him as Lord, and avoiding his judgment

- But that doesn't happen by itself
Yes, God has said that he will make his name great among the nations (Mal 1:11)
Yes, he said that he would bless all the nations of the earth (Gen 12:2-3)
Yes, he said that he would gather his people from the north and the south (Is 43:7)
And yes, we know that in the end, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will worship him together, forever (Rev 7:9); He has ordained those things

But in his sovereignty, he has also ordained that the key to making it happen is *us*
Look at what Paul says in v14; After saying that *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (13), he says . . .
How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? It's a rhetorical question with the obvious answer, that they won't
Our world won't call on someone they don't believe in; Look around

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? (14b) They can't
They not only *won't* call on someone they *don't* believe in, but if they've never heard of him, they *can't* believe; You can't believe in someone you don't know about

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (14c) Again, they won't; If someone doesn't *tell* them about Jesus and the Good News – they'll never hear
And if they never hear, they'll never know about him; And if they never know about him, they'll never believe in him; And if they never believe in him . . .
They'll never call on him; And if they never call on him, they'll never be saved

- The obvious solution to which, is *going* to them; And that's the point of the passage
We have to go, and tell; If people are going to hear, know, believe, and receive – we have to go to them
Everybody? Everybody; Every single one of us is called to go

But we're *not* all called to the same place
Some of us are called to go next door, and that's it; Others are called to our cities, and no further; Some to our nation; And a few are called to go around the world

But there's no getting around the fact that every single one of us is called to . . .

Go somewhere (v14)

That's the gist of v14; If we're going to reach our world for Christ, we have to go; We have to go *to* the world; They not only *need* it, in order to hear and believe . . .
But we've been charged by Jesus himself to be his *witnesses* to the world, his representatives (Acts 1:8)

There's a need and there's a charge, making it incumbent on us to *respond*; To make a conscious decision of our will, to go
Whether it's next door, throughout the city, across the nation, or around the world
But especially around the world

If you're called to go global, your response requires a significant and deliberate decision of your will; Otherwise it won't happen
The obstacles are too high and the barriers too many
Including the fact that you need to leave your life here, and go there, for good
Which wouldn't be so difficult if you didn't have to learn a new language, live in a new culture, and love new people; But you do; W/ the mindset that you may never return
If you're called to go global, you need to respond; It won't happen by itself

- Which begs the question, “How do you know?”
How do I know if I'm called go global? If that's u, the answer comes down to 4 things
 1. **The need is painfully obvious** – and it bothers you to no end; Like Jeremiah and his ministry; The need for warning about God's judgment was painfully obvious
 2. **The thought of going is constantly there** – nagging you in your busier moments, and compelling you in your quieter ones; Think Paul and his letters
He was *constantly* talking about going somewhere else
 3. **The urge is stronger and stronger** – so that you can't get away from it, and nothing else satisfies; Like Jonah and his call to Nineveh; He couldn't get away from it
 4. **Your church is fully behind you** – encouraging and supporting you all the way
Like the church in Antioch was for Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13)

If those 4 criteria are true, you're called; And the time has come to respond (**Summary**)
The time has come to stop occupying yourself with lesser things; Or hesitating b/c of your doubts

- You don't have to know the end from the beginning – you can't
And you don't have to know where you're going; In fact, I'd encourage you to keep an open mind on that*****
And you don't have to know every *step* to take; You just have to take the next one; The *next* step

Which might be publicly presenting yourself to the Lord this weekend; And I'm going to give you an opportunity to do that at the end of our service
An opportunity to come forward, get on your knees, and say "Here I am, Lord; If this is your call on my life, I'm ready to go"
That's the first implication and application of Paul's discussion here – *go somewhere*

The second, is . . .

Send someone (v15)

After asking in v14 – *How are they to hear without someone preaching?* . . .
Paul adds in v15 – *And how are they to preach unless they are sent?*
How can those who are called, especially to the *global* arena – fulfill their ministry and preach the gospel, unless they're *sent*?
Unless they're affirmed, trained, commissioned, and supported
And supported well – *in a manner worthy of God* as 3 Jn 6 says
A manner of excellence that reflects the importance of their message and witness

How can they preach Paul asks, how can they spread the word, if they're not sent?
Once again, they can't; At best they'll be ineffective, and at worst, they won't go
Critical to reaching the world, is to *send* someone, and send them well

- Which we strive to do with every single one of our Global Partners (**photo**)
These are the men and women we've identified, affirmed, trained to varying degrees, and continue to support
Without which, they couldn't do what *they're* doing, and *we* couldn't reach the world
Senders need goers, and goers need senders

And you can count yourself as a sender in our church – if you pray for them, encourage them from time to time, and give
We support all of our global partners out of our regular budget
In fact, 13% of our overall budget goes to Outreach; A significant part of which is the support of our global partners
So by virtue of *belonging* to this church, you're sending someone*****

- Which is not only necessary in order for them to *preach* as Paul says, but it's a huge *blessing* to those who hear; Those who *receive* the word
That's the idea of v15b, where Paul says – *As it is written* [written in Is 52:7], "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*"
IOW those who are sent, are a huge blessing to those who hear; Why? B/c they're the bearer of good news
Just like a surgeon is a blessing to those in the waiting room, when he tells them everything is fine

If we're going to *reach* our world with the Good News, we need to *send* someone to our world

And last, if you're that someone, if you're called to go global . . .

Expect nothing (v16)

Again, look at the text

After saying in v15 – *How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!* . . .
Paul says in v16 – *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*
IOW beautiful as those are who go and spread the word, not everyone responds
Not everyone obeys God's call for faith and repentance

For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" (16)
Paul invokes Isaiah's experience to say that not very many will believe
And to expect otherwise, will leave you disillusioned at best, and bitter at worst
Especially in a cross-cultural setting where you're out of your element
Better to expect nothing, so you rejoice at anything; Any fruit that you're able to see

- Now, that's not to say that God's word returns void; It's just that we don't always have the privilege of seeing the result; Jeremiah didn't – for his entire life
And neither did Isaiah at times; And the same is true of the other prophets

We don't always get to see the result of spreading God's Word, nor is the result what we hope for sometimes
It wasn't for Paul on some occasions – he was beat up and run out of town
Or how about Peter who was imprisoned; Or Stephen who was stoned to death; Or John who was exiled to an island; Not the result they were hoping for, I'm pretty sure

And they very easily could have become disillusioned and bitter; But they didn't; Why?
B/c they entrusted themselves and their ministries to the Lord, and while keeping their hopes high, managed their expectations; And we should too
When it comes to going, whether across the street or across the ocean – expect nothing

Nothing **except** . . .

Suffering; You *can* expect that; In fact the Bible says we're *destined* for it (1Thess 3:3)
And God grants it to us like it's something we need; **Phil 1:29** says . . .
It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake. It's been granted to us*****
So when you go, expect nothing – except suffering . . .

And persecution; From those in the bondage of false belief and false religions, to those who are convicted by your very presence – there's no avoiding persecution
Jesus said – *If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.* (Jn 15:20)
And Paul said that – *All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* (2 Tim 3:12)

But with it, comes **protection**; God's protection

Like David said in **Ps 56:4** when he was captured by the Philistines – *In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?*
IOW what can *people* do to me? What's the worst that can happen to me? I'm covered; I'm safe; I'm protected
Which is why Jesus could say – *Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.* (Mt 10:28)*****
If you go global, expect *nothing* – except protection; God's protection

And with it, **provision**

Here's the deal – God won't let you down, and he'll give you everything you need; No less and no more
Like the provision of partners to help you, and the wisdom of leaders to guide you, and the love of friends to encourage you, and the presence of his Spirit to comfort you
Where God leads, God provides

And finally, expect nothing except God's **blessing**

God's blessing in little ways and big ways; Familiar ways and unfamiliar
When you *go*, when you're obedient to his call – you can expect his blessing of peace, joy, contentment, strength, and love; Always love

- In which case, you can expect **everything**; Everything!
It doesn't matter if you go as a tentmaker, living in a closed country . . .
Or a linguist, translating Scriptures . . .
Or a church planter among a low-reached or un-reached people group . . .
Or an evangelist in a difficult city; Or a servant in an orphanage . . .
Or a doctor in a hospital; Or a teacher in a school
If God's calling you, and you go – expect the world, and expect everything

Including, best of all, faith; Expect faith; B/c *faith comes from hearing* [as he says in v17],
and hearing through the word of Christ.

IOW through the *proclamation* of the word, and the *penetration* of the word – faith is born; And *that*, is everything; That's the goal

- The question is, do you want to be a part of it? (**Summary**; Band on stage)
And are you ready to *go* in order to do so? Ready to take that next step

If so, you come as I pray; Just come forward, get on your knees, and say – “Here I am Lord; Send me. I know the process may take years. I know it won't be easy . . .
But I'm ready.” If that's you, you come right now

Pray – Father, would you fan into flame our desire to reach our world and make you known? Would you burden us with the plight and eternity of those who don't know you? And help us overcome our fears to take the next step; Find us available

If God's calling you, the time has come to put a stake in the ground
Just slip out of your row, make your way down front, and get on your knees –
presenting yourself to the One who promises everything

You might be a student in high school or college; You might be a young adult or young married; You might be an empty nester or considering a second career
It doesn't matter; What matters is that you respond if God's calling; That you make a deliberate decision; That you take the next step to pursue his call on your life

Pray – Lord, thank you for each and every person up here; Would you bless them for responding to your call, and use them to carry your hope to a hopeless world? And give them clarity in the years ahead, as they prepare to go
And for those of us who remain, would you make us better and better senders?
Receive our tithes and offerings now, to that end (Praise God for you; Response Cards)