

Romans 10:14-21 - The Way of Salvation

Good morning, brothers, and sisters. How good it is to be together in the Lord's presence, putting Him in remembrance, and fellowshiping together in the Lord. And how good it is to consider His Word. His Word is so full. How could we ever live without His Word?

Introduction

We are finishing Romans 10, and we are looking today at verses 14 through 21. But we want to start reading at verses 12 and 13 for context. This will help you understand because it is not a broken thought in Paul's writing here. So, we want to step back two verses.

This is reading from the Darby version, verse 12.

"For there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich towards all that call upon him. For every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

I want you to pay attention to that verse as we begin verse 14.

"How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without one who preaches? and how shall they preach unless they have been sent? according as it is written, How beautiful the feet of them that announce glad tidings of peace, of them that announce glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the glad tidings. For Esaias says, Lord, who has believed our report? So faith then is by a report, but the report by God's word. But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, surely, Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the extremities of the habitable world. But I say, Has not Israel known? First, Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy through them that are not a nation: through a nation without understanding I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and says, I have been found by those not seeking me; I have become manifest to those not inquiring after me. But unto Israel he says, All the day long I have stretched out my hands unto a people disobeying and opposing."

Let us pray.

Father, we are so grateful that You have given us this word. How precious is this word! How precious are all of Your words. Without Your words, the psalmist says, we would perish. Indeed, we come to the One who has spoken words of eternal life, words of spirit and life. And we ask again today, as we consider these eight verses, that You would anoint them and You would grant us to hear those words of life. Lord, we come to You, we bow before You. We thank You for all that You have given us, dear Father, in Christ Jesus. And we ask You to make these eight verses understood to us deep in our spirit today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Ways of God

You know, I mentioned something before. Bear with me. I am going to mention it again until it gets through my thick head and maybe yours. These three chapters have to do with the Ways of God. When I say these three chapters, it is Romans chapters nine, ten, and eleven. We are dealing with the Ways of God. And you get that from chapter 11:33, let me read that verse again:

“O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and untraceable his ways!”

This was Paul as he concluded this great section. And this is in fact what we are seeing in all three of these chapters. Today we are going to look at a specific way. This is the way that in some ways is the most important way of God revealed. It is the Way of Salvation, the Glad Tidings.

Now you just think about it for a moment. Without this Way of Salvation being revealed to us, we would have no fellowship with God; we would be dead in our sins; and we would be without hope in this world, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians. Where would we be? We would be desperate.

So, this is the importance of the Way of Salvation or the Glad Tidings. I think all of God's mercy in one sense is compressed into this way: it is the door opening to us; it is the way through; it is the way into life; it is the way into His abundance that He has manifested to us in Christ Jesus.

So, I think this Way of Salvation that these verses are dealing with is of supreme importance. These eight verses, Romans 10:14-21, are the revelation of God as to the way He will work to bring a people into His fullness. Without that way, it cannot happen. But through that way, we are divinely assured that it does happen, and it will happen, and nothing can prevent it from happening. Because after all, it is God's ways.

When you come to the end of these eight verses, you discover there are those who refuse the way of glad tidings. They refuse it, they reject it. If you can imagine this one and only way that God has made available to all the peoples of the world. Yet in this marvelous grace, there are still those who reject, there are still those who refuse. But thank God, in His mercy, there are those that receive the glad tidings. So that is the ending of these eight verses.

Outline

Let us look at three sections:

First, Paul deals with Four Vital Questions Concerning the Glad Tidings. Without an understanding of what these four vital questions mean, we cannot understand the Way of Salvation. That is the first thing. That is verses 14 and 15.

Secondly, there is Believing the Report. We need to believe the report. If we do not believe the report, we can never enter into the Way of Salvation. That is verses 16 to 18.

And finally, we get to this point I mentioned, The Glad Tidings Refused or Received in verses 19 to 21.

So that is our outline. And may the Lord help us as we look at it.

Divine Assurance

First, I want to drop back to verse 13. This sets the whole context, and if we do not understand the context, we cannot understand what Paul is talking about.

Reading verse 13.

“For every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”

So, without a doubt, what Paul is dealing with is salvation. And if we accept the fact that these three chapters are a revelation of God's ways, it is the way to salvation. That is what he is dealing with; not just salvation, but the way to it; His divine way into it and how it has been made available. Now, I believe this 13th verse is of extreme divine assurance. I mentioned that, I think, last time. But this is extreme divine assurance.

The Universal Call

It says, “for every one.” I want to read Paul's words and put my own emphasis in it, “for *every one*.” Now, who does that leave out? Every individual should be included. “Whosoever, whosoever;” it is a universal call to all of mankind, to all His creation, to come into this way of salvation. “For every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”

The Importance of ‘Shall’

Now, I think I have mentioned this before, but that word “shall” is what caught me so much. There is an enormous difference between “shall” and “may.” You know, we can say you “may” do something, but there is a great difference when you say you “shall” do something.

I will never forget my training as a young engineer. The older partners, who had much more wisdom than I ever had, would say to me, “We want you to understand the importance of shall.” And they did it, and it even stuck. And I remember in the legal documents we produced; which are called construction documents, which you build by, which are plans and specifications; they said, “Make sure you put in those specifications ‘shall,’ do not put ‘may.’ Do not leave it up to the discretion of the fellow that is going to build it. He may substitute anything he wants; tell him what he shall do.” And believe it or not, it stuck.

And I read something that may be clearer than that illustration about the difference between “shall” and “may.” We have talked about Romans being a legal document. We are in the court, the highest court, the divine court. And this is a legal document. And within legal documents, there is an enormous difference between “shall,” and “may.”

One person wrote this: "In a legal document, there is an important distinction between 'shall' and 'may.' 'Shall' is a command. Whatever follows 'shall' is mandatory. It is required and it must be done. On the other hand, 'may' is discretionary. What comes after 'may' is optional, and it is at the discretion of the person making the decision."

The Lord said "whosoever;" "everyone who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." Now, I hope you have a deeper appreciation of that word. That one word gives us the fullest of divine assurance.

Four Vital Questions Concerning the Glad Tidings

Now let us look at Romans 10:14-15. These two verses show us something wonderful. In 14 and 15, Paul asks four questions. How do you know they are questions? He starts everyone with "how." All four of these questions, he starts with "how."

And these four questions are God's secret on how we enter in to The Way of Salvation, how this door was opened to us. What is God's dealing to make it available to you and to me? So, it is important we understand these four questions.

It is dealing with The Way of Salvation. I think of that wonderful verse written by the writer of Hebrews, in Hebrews 2:3. He begins with the word "how," and he says, "how shall we escape if we have been negligent of so great salvation?"

Brothers and sisters, think of the meaning of that. He is impressing on those Hebrew believers the importance of this salvation. And this is the only place that phrase is used, which sets it in context, "so great salvation." So how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? It is an ominous warning, but it is the very spirit of these eight verses. If we neglect what God has done, where will we be? What hope would we have? What would our future be based upon? What would our assurance come from?

So, that is the importance of these questions. Let me read you the questions.

1. "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?" It is a good question. How shall they call? The 13th verse said, "everyone," "whosoever," "who;" three emphases by the way, "shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." But how can we call on somebody we do not even know? How can we do that? It is a good question. Think about it.
2. The second question I think is also important. "And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" Another good question.
3. And the third question. "And how shall they hear without one who preaches?"
4. And the fourth question. "And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?"

Think about those questions. They open to us God's way of salvation. And we need therefore to understand the reality of them. They are so comprehensive. Just in those few verses is compressed the whole way of salvation. And when you look at it, they are so

comprehensive it can be made known to us, and we can receive it in full, this so great salvation.

It says we must call upon the Lord, right? It says we must believe on the Lord, right? It says we must hear the Word of God through His messengers and His message. Isn't that what it says? And then if you look at the fourth question, in verse 15, it says these messengers must be sent of the Lord. That is what it is telling us.

Now, I think naturally speaking, we can break these four questions into two parts: Man's Responsibility and God's Provision. We have a responsibility and then God makes a provision. That is all you need to know.

In Man's Responsibility, we see the first two: Call upon the name of the Lord and believe on the Lord. And with God's Provision, we see the last two: the preaching of the Word, and God sends His messengers. That is what makes it possible.

Now I think naturally we would like these questions answered in the order they are given: 1, 2, 3, 4, right? It makes sense. That is how we did it in school. I do not know how the young people do it in school, but that is how we did it in school.

But actually, I think there is a secret. You need to look at it 4, 3, 2, 1. And if you do not look at it in reverse order, all the responsibility is put upon man. If you look at it in the reverse order, which I think is the right order, then you begin to understand what God did to make it possible.

He sent Someone; He made His Word available. And only then can we call upon the name of the Lord and believe on the Lord. So, I think this is the right way to look at this. You might ask, "Brother, why would you look at this backwards?" Some people might say, "Why are you backwards, brother?" But believe me, the "why" is because God is the initiator, man is the responder. We get it backwards; we do not initiate it, God initiated it. And because He initiated it, and made available in His provision everything we need to enter in to the way of salvation, we can know this so great salvation.

The Sent One

So first we will consider the Sent One.

Verse 15 says, "and how shall they preach unless they have been sent?" Right? Think about it, God sent His only begotten Son. That is the secret of everything. The way of salvation hinges, literally hinges, upon that single act of God. Had He not sent His only begotten Son, the Sent One, salvation would never be available to you and to me and to the whole world.

That is the first thing: "how shall they preach unless they have been sent?" God sent His only begotten Son. Someone mentioned John 1:14 during our remembrance time at the Lord's table this morning, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth."

Thank God He sent His only Son. Where would you be without that? You would not be here; you would be hopeless. But because He sent the Sent One, we are here, and we are saved.

Please remember that, above everything else. Do not get the order in the natural way. Give thanks that salvation, the door of salvation, has been opened to you by the sending of the Sent One.

You know He is the Messiah. It means the Anointed One, right? Did you know that Messiah only occurs four times in the Bible? I would have thought it occurred more than that, but it only occurs four times. It occurs twice in the Old Testament in Daniel, in back-to-back verses, Daniel 9:25 and Daniel 9:26. It occurs in the New Testament only in John's Gospel, in John 1:41 and John 4:25. Only four references to the Anointed One, who was sent to us.

Not only this anointed one, the Anointed One. Because in the Old Testament, "Messiah" means "the Anointed One." It is interesting, you may not know this, but when you translate Hebrew "Messiah" into Greek, it literally means "Christ." There is only one Anointed One that was sent. And only because the Anointed One was sent do we have this wonderful experience and reality of the way of salvation.

This is of great importance, brothers and sisters. We need to understand that this One is not only God's message. This One that was sent is God's messenger. And that is foremost when we study these four questions. He is the only way to salvation.

Do you remember in those wonderful chapters, John 13 to John 17, that are only recorded in John's Gospel? Do you remember before the cross, the Lord was giving the highest assurance to His people? And do you remember what happened? He was telling them He was going to the Father, and they knew the way. And then Thomas [one of the few times we hear Thomas speak in the Bible; and Thomas, at least we can say for him, was a consistent person. He was a doubter in those cases we read about,] said, "We do not know where you are going and we do not know the way." And the Lord said the most profound thing in John 14:6. He did not say, "Well, I will tell you what the way is." He said to those, and they must have been astonished, "I am the way."

Do you understand the difference? The way of salvation is not some process we bring people through to get saved. The way of salvation is literally the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is discovering Him as everything. It is discovering Him as, I think that old expression, the "kit and caboodle." And if you need translation on that, please ask someone else. He is the whole of it. God gave us everything when He gave us the Lord Jesus, the Sent One, the Anointed One. And without that, we would never know salvation.

In John 14:6, He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." And then He said something so extraordinary. He said, "No one comes to the Father unless by me."

Isn't that powerful? There is no other way, there is no other door, there is no other access. The world gets furious at us believers when we say that. They say, "Do you mean somebody cannot come through Buddhism? Do you mean someone cannot be a Hindu, a Shinto, a 'whatever' too?"

These are not our words, these are the Lord's words. Forgive me when I say this: either the Lord was the most profound liar that ever lived, or this is true. Well, this is true! I would have thought maybe He would say, "I will show you the way." He did not say that. "I will teach you truth." He did not say that. "I will tell you about life." He did not say that. He said, "I am the way, I am the truth."

Notice those two words, "I am." They knew exactly what He was saying. These Jewish people were brought back to Exodus 3 when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said to him, "I AM hath sent you." They knew. This was the ultimate affirmation, "I AM."

He is the Sent One. Because of Him we can call upon the Lord; because of Him we can believe in the Lord; because of Him you shall be saved. That is it, the Sent One.

But it is interesting to me, when I considered these points, not only was He the Sent One, but He continues in this way of salvation. Do you remember the apostles? Most of you probably know this, but the Greek word for apostle is apostolos.

Here it means "The Sent One;" an ambassador, one who is sent. So, God continues in His way. Not only was He, "The Sent One;" in fact, He is "The Apostle."

Do you remember Hebrews 3:1? "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus." Isn't that wonderful? That is wonderful to me. He is "The Apostle."

And yet, in His way, to ensure that we can come into this way of salvation, He continues to send, and He sent His own twelve apostles. How wonderful we have their writings, many of them. How wonderful we have the Word of God because of these ones that were sent.

An apostle is an ambassador of the Gospel. That is their one job, an ambassador of the Gospel. They are a messenger that has been sent. Paul was explaining who the apostles are in II Corinthians 5:20. He said, "We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us, we entreat for Christ, Be reconciled to God."

You know it is the practice, I think, of every nation on this earth to send ambassadors to other nations they have dealings with. And those ambassadors are responsible for one thing: to bring the sovereign message of that kingdom or that state or that country that they came from to the nation they go to.

I thought it was interesting. I did not know how many ambassadors the United States had. I do not know if I really care, but I found out they have 168 ambassadors. That is a lot of "sent" people.

Do you know who has the most ambassadors in the world? What country has the most ambassadors in the world? Well, it is China. I am surprised. You know, China has 173 ambassadors. I do not know a single ambassador to the United States. I know one ambassador. Only one. Do not hold that against me, okay? My politics are not very good.

Mike Huckabee has been sent to be the ambassador to Israel. And what I love about him is he is an ambassador for Christ: He is a true believer; he is a Baptist minister; he is somebody that knows the Lord. It is wonderful that he got sent to Israel. Maybe he can show them the way of salvation in between his whatever national dealings with them, and speak of the Messiah, the Sent One. So, ambassadors are sent of the Lord. That is who the apostles are.

The heavenly ambassadors carry a far more vital message than these earthly ambassadors. Think about it. They are entrusted, according to Paul, the message of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. That is a tremendous responsibility. They are sent out to tell this sin-sick world, "Be reconciled to God." What a message.

That is the message this world needs: God wants to reconcile with you, be reconciled to God. So, think about it. When the Lord was caught up to heaven, to be seated by the majesty on high, He continued to send His ambassadors to the world. That is wonderful.

I Corinthians 1:17 says what these ambassadors are to do: "For Christ has not sent me to baptise, but to preach glad tidings; not in wisdom of word, that the cross of the Christ may not be made vain."

Now I want to take you a step further. You know this is not the end of the Sent Ones. You are a sent one, I am a sent one, every believer is a sent one. And we are to continue to be the ambassadors that bear this heavenly message, this way of salvation, to this world. And without us bearing this message, this world will die in sin. What a responsibility. What a responsibility!

Oh, we need to consider that we are the sent ones as well. Thank God for the Sent One. Thank God for the sent ones, the apostles. But we too have a responsibility. Did you know that? Did you know you are an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven? You are. Your one job is to bring that message from this King on high, this exalted King, the only King, to a dying world.

And that is God's way of salvation. I will never forget Brother Kaung used to say something quite often to us young fellows. And I do not mind confessing that it was not very clear to us at first, but it finally sunk in after years. He said to us, "God may change His methods, but He never changes His ways."

I thought that was profound wisdom. He is still sending forth people. He is still sending ones. In fact, let me read to you some verses you are familiar with in Matthew chapter nine. When we talk about the gospel, we pray these verses.

Matthew 9:36-38: "But when he saw the crowds he was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed, and cast away as sheep not having a shepherd. Then

saith he to his disciples, The harvest is great and the workmen are few; supplicate therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth workmen unto his harvest.”

Brothers and sisters, I believe this should be our often-made request to the heavens, that God would still be sending forth ones with a burden for the way of salvation, that God would put upon us what He put upon the apostle Paul: “a necessity is laid upon me; for it is woe to me if I should not announce the glad tidings.” I believe this is that fourth question.

Preach the Glad Tidings

The third question. It says one vital thing that these sent ones are commissioned to do. They are sent to preach the message, and this is the one thing that they are called to do. Brothers and sisters, we need to understand the importance of preaching.

Now, we may not put a high regard on it. We may think these are just God's words, but God somehow in His mysterious ways has chosen preaching as the way for this gospel to go out to the world. Think of it.

You know, Corinthians talk about the foolishness of preaching, right? You remember those verses. I Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom has not known God, God has been pleased by the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe.” To the world, preaching is foolishness, but to God, and we know from I Corinthians 1:18, it is the power of God to salvation. Think of it, preaching.

Isn't that amazing? I do not know about you, if you can remember back before you were saved; for some of you, that is a long reach. For me, it was 53 years ago. I am talking about the power of preaching, that is where I want to go with this. I remember one time as a young boy in high school; I went to get tires for my poor little 62 Ford Falcon. This was a terrible little car that Ford made. I remember going to Virginia Tech, and going across Afton Mountain I got passed by an 18-wheeler in my 62 Ford Falcon.

But one day I went to get tires for that little jalopy. And when I was getting tires, there was a tire mechanic. You know, I was just waiting for him to put my tires on. He shared the Lord with me. I had never heard it, it was alive, it was full of conviction. He said something like, “God wants you.” I thought, “Who is God? And why would He want me if He were God?”

And those words laid upon my heart for about four years until I was saved. And I knew that tire mechanic was not in the business of putting on tires, but he was an ambassador of the gospel. And as that ambassador, that sent one, he shared with me the way of salvation.

Well, that is how important preaching is. It may be a word, but when the Holy Spirit is behind a word, it can change. It has power to convict men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Brothers and sisters, how powerful is preaching!

Preaching is the only thing, in God's view, in the way of salvation that will change this sin-sick world. That is marvelous. So not only does He provide sent ones, He provides His Word to be sent forth, His living Word.

The Importance of Hearing

Now, the second question - remember, we are going backwards, this might be a little confusing still – is the importance of hearing. Do you know how important hearing is? It is quite important. I am getting in the older crowd and everyone tells me I have hearing aids.

Well, thank God we have a better hearing aid than the one at Costco. We have the Holy Spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit who can speak to us and we can hear the heavenly words. You have divine hearing aids.

Do you understand the importance of hearing? That was what that second question was. How can they believe unless they have heard? God makes sure we hear. He sends forth His ambassadors and those ambassadors that have the one mission to bring the kingdom message of heaven to us. And then our ears can be opened, and we can hear.

Now, if you do not think hearing is important in the Bible, just read Revelation chapter two and three. Revelation chapter two and three are the heart of Revelation. It was the message to the churches. It was Christ, the risen head of the Church, coming into those seven churches of Asia and walking among them and examining whether they were a true testimony of Jesus.

And when you read those seven messages to those seven churches, you discover many of them had amazing problems, many of them. The Lord speaks directly to those amazing problems. Individually He knows the situation and He deals with it. It is pretty hard for your church to be told that Satan is in your midst, but the Lord knew how to deal with it.

But here is the point. At the end of each one of those individual messages, there was a specific message. And that specific message was the same to every one of those churches. Now, to me, that raises that to a higher level. And that message was, “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.” That is the most important message.

Unless we hear, we cannot know the way of salvation. This is why this is so important. Brothers and sisters, the reason I am going backwards in this is to assure you that a hearing ear does not come from you, but a hearing ear is provided by God Himself. What a difference.

You know, if it depended on me to have a hearing ear, I would never hear. I would be, well, deaf as a post. But God in His mercy gives to His people hearing ears. And when He gives hearing ears, we can call upon the Lord; and we can believe upon the Lord; and we can be saved. How marvelous this is. The way of salvation begins when God gives a hearing ear. Without it, we can never be saved.

So, we need to pray for people. When we pray for the Gospel; when we pray for our loved ones that seem to be deaf, that come to the Lord and cannot hear anything; we need to pray, “Lord, give them a hearing ear.” If we stand upon, “Lord, they are deaf. They cannot hear You. But it is Your desire that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4). Give them a hearing ear.” And that will make the difference.

Call Upon the Lord and Be Saved

It is quite important that we understand this. And it is only after these four things are done; only after we have heard the message preached by the sent one and we believe, can we call upon the Lord and then we shall be saved.

How Beautiful the Feet of Them that Announce God Tidings

Romans 10:15 says something marvelous: “and how shall they preach unless they have been sent? according as it is written.” That is where I want you to start, “according as it is written, How beautiful the feet of them that announce glad tidings of peace, of them that announce glad tidings of good things!”

Now, brothers and sisters, what this says is the announcement by the sent ones of glad tidings is beautiful to God. He says, “You have beautiful feet.” Now, you may not have beautiful feet, but you understand what I am saying. In the spiritual sense you have beautiful feet. This is what He is looking for in His people, those bearers of the glad tidings; bearing it to a dying world, bringing this message of life to a world that is dead.

Proverbs 1: 15-16 is talking about is consenting to be with sinners. It says, “my son, walk not in the way with them, keep back thy foot from their path; for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.”

So, think about that contrast. In God's view, there are only two kinds of feet in this world. There are those with beautiful feet, as that verse from Isaiah 52:7 Paul shared. Do you have beautiful feet? Are you one of the sent ones? Are you bearing that message of the kingdom? If you are, God rejoices; but if not, your feet are quick to run to evil. Quick, they make haste. There are only two kinds of feet.

By this calling, the world is changed. This is the highest message we can bring. This is the highest privilege made to man, that we can be bearers of the heavenly message of the way of salvation. May the Lord help us to be those bearers. We are becoming quite burdened about that lately. Let us pray the Lord would do that.

Believing the Report

The second thing is believing the report. We must believe this report that has been announced. Now look at Romans 10:16. It says, “But they have not all obeyed the glad tidings.” It is interesting that Paul said “obeyed the glad tidings.” He did not say “believe the glad tidings,” that would be appropriate. That is what he is saying all the way through there. But here, for some reason, this anointed man of God said, “not all have obeyed the

glad tidings.” And do you know why that is? Because when you believe the glad tidings, the concrete evidence will be that you obey. That is the difference.

Obedience of Faith

When Paul wrote this wonderful book of Romans, he has his own particular phrase about obedience. It is only a Pauline phrase, it only occurs in two places, and it only occurs in the book of Romans. In Romans 1:5, he says this gospel is given, “for obedience of faith among all the nations.”

Notice what he said, not believing, it is the obedience of faith. And when you come to Romans 16:26, in the end that same identical phrase appears again, “for obedience of faith to all the nations.”

Brothers and sisters, if you have really heard the way of salvation, the evidence will be obedience. No longer a struggle, it will be the manifest evidence of believing the report.

The Unimaginable Sufferings of the Sent One

Paul quotes from Isaiah 53:1, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?” This was the report of the unimaginable sufferings of the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 53. This was the report of the Sent One. And what the Sent One, the Apostle and High Priest of our faith, had to go through so that you may be brought into this salvation. It is extraordinary. I think when we read Isaiah 53, we ought to read it with reverence and awe. Can you imagine what it says? It pleased God to crush His Son.

Can you imagine? That is what the way of salvation costs. “Who hath believed our report?” That is the very beginning of Isaiah 53. And, “to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

It cost Him everything to bring this way of salvation. It is the unimaginable sufferings of the Lord. I think when we read this chapter, we really ought to fall before the Lord and say, “You did this for me? You did this for the world? The only One became sin.” Somebody prayed it in the remembrance time, “that we might become the God’s righteousness in Him.” Who could have imagined He did it all to bring in this way of salvation?

The Insult of Unbelief

You know, brothers and sisters, yet in all that God did, some still do not believe. How terrible. Can you imagine? First of all, try to think of it as the highest insult to God that has ever been. He did not send a prophet; He did not send an angel; He did not send Gabriel; He sent His only Son. And if you read Isaiah 53, it says He was, “smitten of God.” It says in Isaiah 52, “his visage was so marred more than any man.” That is incredible. This is the way of salvation that He brought.

I read something that touched me deeply. It was from Griffin Thomas. He said of the Jews that still failed to believe, “opportunities were therefore afforded and were deliberately refused.” How strong.

He said another thing that touched me. He said, "this resulted in the national and almost universal rejection of the gospel by Israel." When you read these three chapters, only a remnant of the Jews was saved. How terrible that is.

And then I read another thing that encouraged me as ambassadors and sent ones. "The responsibility for proclaiming this rests with us. The responsibility for receiving or rejecting it lies with those who hear it." May the Lord in His mercy help us to be those faithful sent ones.

Have Hearing of the Words

Now look at Romans 10:17. This is a very important thing; without it you can never understand the way of salvation. "So faith then is by a report;" that same report, "Who hath believed our report?" Isaiah 53; "but the report by God's word."

This is very important. We need to understand it. I like what Darby says when he talks about this report. He said the word for the report here twice in verse 17 includes what is heard and the hearing. Did you understand that?

It includes the "heard," what is heard; and it includes the "hearing." This is very powerful, this is God's way.

People may hear sounds. It says later, "the words went out of the Jews." People may hear words, but do they have "hearing?" That is the difference. That is the keen difference in this verse 17.

This is what we need to have. We need to not only have the report, which is the words, but we need the inner hearing that comes from that report. I thought this was magnificent, I have never heard anybody else say it, and I like it very much. It is not just the outward and the written word, but the living word.

You know, there is a difference. The Jews had the word; they loved the word. They read the word, they pored over the word, they memorized it. Do you think you could memorize the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch? Do you think you could? Try it. I have trouble remembering a handful of verses.

They loved the word, but they never had the hearing. That was the problem. They had the "heard," but they did not have the "hearing." And that explains the dilemma of the rejection of the glad tidings.

The Living Word of God

You know, in the original language of Greek, there are two Greek words for "word." I think most of you know that there is "Logos." It is the most common. Matter of fact, when you read John 1: "and the Word became flesh;" "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That is Logos, that is fact. That is the written word of God, that is the manifest utterance. The written word of God is Christ, He is the Logos.

But then when you go to other places, more rarely, there is that second Greek word which is "Rhema." Now, Rhema means the living word. And to me, that is the hearing. Do you understand?

The Rhema is hearing. It is when the word of God, which we need, the written word of God, is made alive in our spirit and it becomes the living word of God.

We read, after the feeding of the five thousand, there were those that were offended and went away because they thought that to eat of His body and to drink of His blood was offensive. And if you read the Old Testament, you can understand why the Jews were offended, right? They were without understanding. But He said something.

In John 6:63, He says, "the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." There is the occurrence of the Greek word Rhema, the living word. And you remember He turned to His disciples, and He said to them, "Will ye also go away?" And you remember Peter's response. He said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal." Now do you know that again is Rhema. Both those occasions, that is the hearing, we not only need the word of God. I am not belittling the word of God. Do you understand that? The word of God is of absolute importance. But for us to enter into the way of salvation, there must be something deeper. We must be granted hearing. We must be granted a hearing from the living word of God. In fact, it talks about that second phrase in verse 17, "but the report by God's word," the second word is "rhema." That is how the report gets into us; and we believe it, and we call upon the name of the Lord, and we are saved. That is of utmost importance.

In fact, let me say this. I do not like the way Darby version says in verse 17, "but the report by God's word." And I do not like the way the KJV says it, "and hearing by the word of God." One commentator said: in all the best manuscripts this verse says, "the report is by the word of Christ." That is where the living word is made alive in Christ. Do you understand how important that is?

That explains everything, why some are saved and why some are not saved. They may have heard words, they may have heard sounds; but they never heard the living Word of God made alive that transformed them. That is the whole secret of the way of salvation. Matter of fact, those of you that have the NASB may like it because it says, "the word of Christ." That is accurate.

Let me read Romans 10:18, "But I say, Have they not heard?" And it says the answer to that, this is talking to the Jews. "Yea, surely, Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the extremities of the habitable world."

It means yes, it is an insistence. Certainly, they have heard, but they have not gotten the living word. Rhema has not been their own word that God made alive to them. And that is what explains the dilemma of the Jews. This means certainly the word has gone out, their voice has gone out, but they were not quickened by the living words of Christ.

The Glad Tidings Refused or Received

Believe it or not, with all that God's done, there are those who refuse the glad tidings. It says in Romans 10:18, "Have they not heard? Yea, surely their voice has gone out to the extremities of the habitable world." And then verse 19, "But I say, Has not Israel known?"

They heard, but they did not know. Do you remember what Paul said in Philippians 3:10? It is the difference between knowing the way of salvation and not knowing it. He said, "that I may know Him." It is not just to hear outward, but to know Him. That was the difference.

This is key when it comes to The Glad Tidings Refused or Received. One brother wrote, "There are no excuses for Israel's neglect and rejection. It was not merely an instance of not hearing and not believing, but of something far worse. It meant definite neglect and deliberate refusal, rejection, and contempt."

But brothers and sisters, this is the mercy of God to us Gentiles. You know, when they did not believe as a whole nation, the door of the gospel was flung open to us, the Gentiles. Can you imagine? What mercy of God! That was the second part of the promise of the covenant to Abraham, "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

It was the first time it happened. We have been blessed with the highest blessing, with a hearing of the way of salvation because of the Jews' rejection. These are those that refused and we are those that have received. We are the "no nation" and "the nation without understanding" that received even while they rejected.

Conclusion

Now, did God's plan fail? You might say God's plan failed and He went to His second-best way. God's plan did not fail. He knew the Jews would refuse it. He knew the Jews as a nation, the only nation ever chosen by God on the earth; the only people, as a nation that were chosen; would refuse Him. He knew it.

Yet it was the opportunity to open that door to those of us to believe. This is the mercy of God. When you look at Romans 10:21, it says, "But unto Israel he says, All the day long I have stretched out my hands unto a people disobeying and opposing." Now think about that.

There was one brother, his name is James Denny. He was a Scottish theologian that many people quote. He was a brilliant man. He had a fairly short life, but he was a brilliant brother in the Lord. And many of the authors that we know quote James Denny. And he went on to explain that here God is still, even in the midst of rejection, holding out His arms all the day long to the Jews. Now, do you think that is mercy? He will never give up. When you come to chapter 11, all Israel will be saved. They will become objects of mercy, just like we are objects of mercy.

But those that have refused, it was only temporary. And God will bring the way of salvation to them. Now, I like that verse Romans 10:21. Just try for a moment, not now, go

home, try to hold out your arms all the day long. You might last five minutes. But God never lowers His arms. You know, Peter said, "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years." He, through all eternity, will never lower His arms until those unbelieving and rejecting Jews come home. That will be His joy. And that is what chapter 11 deals with. Well, this is enough. May we realize that because of His way of salvation, He can never fail; His purpose will never fail; His having a people for Himself will never fail. It is impossible.

Let us have a word of prayer.

Lord, we thank You for the fullness of these eight verses. We are still telling You, Lord, we do not know that we understand them completely. But we want You to give us that hearing ear. We want You to make Your Word alive to us. We want You to make it real to us. We want You to breathe upon it, and we want those words of life to change us forever. That we would know the way of salvation, the glad tidings. That we would be Your sent ones in this age to bring forth that message to a world. And that You would; in Your enduring patience and unrelenting love; holding out Your arms all the day long; ultimately save the Jews. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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