

Our text today is a continuation of Paul's heart cry for the Jews and his understanding from Scripture of what had happened. It contains one quote after another from the Old Testament. To understand Paul's message, we have to understand the context of his quotations and stay within the context of this letter to the Romans. He has been teaching that salvation has always been by grace through faith. It has never been in keeping the law, but rather in the recognition that we can't keep it and throwing ourselves upon the grace of God to find mercy and forgiveness. In the passage immediately preceding this one, he used the words of Moses to explain that there was an easier way than the law. It was a way that God had put into the heart and mouth of everyone (Romans 10:8). We only have to confess and believe. He summed it up with the verse just preceding our text for today, ¹¹ *For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."* Romans 10:11

Now Paul will go on to tell us the implications of that truth. ¹² *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.* Calling upon the name of the Lord is a frequent expression in the Old Testament. That calling is the same as confessing in the previous verses. Calling on His name and declaring the greatness of His deeds are linked in a number of passages (1Chronicles 16:8; Psalm 75:1; 105:1) It is to declare that God is

sovereign and we are His needy creatures dependent on His goodness.

The first time we read of calling on the name of the Lord is in Genesis. ²⁶ *To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.* Genesis 4:26 Abraham called on the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8; 21:33). Isaac did as well (Genesis 26:25). Elijah called on the name of the LORD when the fire of God consumed his water soaked altar in the contest with the prophets of Baal (1Kings 18:24). Moses, Aaron, and Samuel also called on the name of the Lord (Psalm 99:6).

The people of Seth's day and the patriarchs could not be called Jews. None of them knew the name of Jesus. So what does Paul mean when He says *"...the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him"*? He means just what he wrote. God blesses all who call out to Him. He doesn't withhold a blessing because you are of a certain race, or even because you don't have perfect theology. Those who call out to God from their heart, looking to God for His answers, will find that God bestows His riches on them. The riches God bestows is salvation through Christ, which is made clear in the next verse.

¹³ *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* We confess to God that Jesus is Lord. We believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, and we are saved. But all those that I referred to that called on the name of the

Commented [notes5]: Genesis 12:8 (ESV)

⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Commented [notes6]: Genesis 21:33 (ESV)

³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

Commented [notes7]: Genesis 26:25 (ESV)

²⁵ So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Commented [notes8]: 1 Kings 18:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken."

Commented [notes9]: Psalm 99:6 (ESV)

⁶ Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called upon his name. They called to the LORD, and he answered them.

Commented [notes1]: Romans 10:8 (ESV)

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. E(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

Commented [notes2]: 1 Chronicles 16:8 (ESV)

⁸ Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

Commented [notes3]: Psalm 75:1 (ESV)

¹ We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.

Commented [notes4]: Psalm 105:1 (ESV)

¹ Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

Lord did not know the name of Jesus or that He would be raised. Paul has brought it down to the bare essentials for those who have not heard. **Paul is equating confessing and believing with calling on the name of the Lord as the ancients did.** People often ask, "What about those who never heard of Jesus?" Paul addressed this here and in chapter four. Wherever the gospel has yet to be proclaimed, people can still call on the name of the Lord, just as Abraham and David did (Romans 4:3; 4:6-8).

Some people would ask "On what name will they call?" Paul answers that in the following verses. First we must understand that the expression, "the name of the Lord" means His authority and nature. To the Hebrews, a name represented all that one is. Based on Isaiah 26:18b, Paul is telling us that God reaches out to all regardless of nationality or race. If anyone calls on Him for salvation, they will be saved. God bestows the riches of salvation on all who place their trust in Him rather than their own goodness. This is only possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

That does not negate the need for evangelists and missionaries. *¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent?* First Paul tells us it is important that the gospel be proclaimed. This is his life. This is why he puts his life in constant danger (1Corinthians 15:30-31). He knows the

calling and the need to proclaim Christ. He is a sent one, an apostle. Jesus told the disciples before Pentecost to go to the uttermost part of the earth as a witness of what Christ had done (Acts 1:8).

To some extent we are all sent. We are all to be a witness. Whatever our occupation, we are to live it out as a witness of Jesus, taking every opportunity to share the Good News of what He has done in our life and what He can do in their life. Pray for those opportunities. (Matthew 9:38)

Paul was sent by the Holy Spirit through the elders at the church in Antioch (Acts 13:2-3). God is the One that calls and sends those He chooses to certain fields to proclaim the good news so that they might hear and believe. I love reading about God's sent ones. The testimonies of the missionary evangelists are so exciting and encouraging. If you've never read the biographies of men like Hudson Taylor and Adonirum Judson and so many more, you are really missing a blessing.

Now Paul jumps to a passage from Isaiah 52 to describe the sent ones. Throughout the book of Romans he refers to this chapter. Paul quotes Isaiah more than any other New Testament writer. Describing these sent ones he quotes, *As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

The passage was predicting deliverance from captivity in Assyria and Babylon, but Paul is applying it to deliverance from the bondage of sin. While Jews saw the

Commented [notes13]: Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Commented [notes10]: Romans 4:3 (ESV)

³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Commented [notes11]: Romans 4:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: ⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Commented [notes14]: Matthew 9:38 (ESV)

³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Commented [notes15]: Acts 13:2-3 (ESV)

² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Commented [notes12]: 1 Corinthians 15:30-31 (ESV)

³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour?

³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

passage referring to the Messiah or His forerunner, Paul sees it as speaking of the Apostles that share the good news of what the Messiah has accomplished. The verse before the one that Paul quotes speaks of the Jews knowing the Messiah's name and revealing Himself to them (Isaiah 52:6). Of course Paul sees this as referring to Jesus. The Isaiah prophecy goes on to speak of redemption and the ends of the earth seeing the salvation of God (Isaiah 52:10). Paul doesn't elaborate on this, but his Jewish readers would know the context and see that it backs up what he has already declared. The salvation Jesus offers is for all mankind.

Isaiah 52:13 begins one of the suffering servant songs. It is one of a number of songs in Isaiah regarding the Messiah and the suffering He would endure. ¹⁶ *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"* Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1 that links the two passages by referring to the Messiah as the arm of the Lord (Isaiah 52:10; 53:1). What Paul is doing here is saying that though God has shown Himself to the Jews and let them know His name, they haven't believed the messengers, the Apostles. Only a remnant of Jews has received the gospel and come out of legalistic religion to freedom in a relationship with Christ, their Messiah. Isaiah 53 is that great passage about Jesus bearing our transgressions and becoming our guilt offering (Isaiah 53:10-11). It is one of two clear passages in the Old Testament about the suffering of Christ and the

victory He would accomplish on our behalf.

Don't lose sight of Paul's train of thought. He has cried out for the salvation of his people. He has shown in Scripture that only a remnant would be saved. He just showed us that the good news goes to the Jews as well as the Gentiles, but only a few will believe. Only those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. They must recognize their inability to be righteous on their own and see their need of a spiritual Savior. Though Jesus revealed Himself and the very nature of God to the Jews, only a few believed the message of His Apostles.

How will they have the faith to call on the name of the Lord? ¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* The message is the medium of faith. We can't confess that Jesus is Lord or that God raised Him unless we hear the gospel. Then we can apply the gift of faith to the message delivered by those who come to us with the word of Christ.

This is another of the many verses constantly taken out of context. We often use it to say that if you want more faith read the Bible. While it is true that the Scriptures increase our faith, this verse is about the salvation of mankind. Paul has said that God puts the word in our heart and mouth and anyone can be saved if they will just confess and believe. Verse 17 is telling us that the faith to confess and believe comes from hearing the gospel.

Now Paul will explain that the hearing through the word of Christ not only

Commented [notes16]: Isaiah 52:6 (ESV)

⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I."

Commented [notes17]: Isaiah 52:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Commented [notes18]: Isaiah 52:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Commented [notes19]: Isaiah 53:1 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Commented [notes20]: Isaiah 53:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

comes through the evangelist or missionary, but also through nature. It's not as if those who never heard a missionary have an excuse not to believe in a Creator on whom they must depend for their salvation. He said that in the first chapter of this letter (Romans 1:19-20).

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

Paul is citing Psalm 19. It is fascinating to look into the passages the Spirit of God inspires Paul to use to make his point. Paul is focused on the first portion of the Psalm in which God declares that His glory is seen in the heavens and that message goes to everyone on earth. But if we go a little further in the Psalm, the Word that transforms our life becomes the subject. In the last section there is a prayer that heart and mouth will be conformed to what is acceptable to God (Psalm 19:14). It ends declaring God is our redeemer. This is everything Paul has been teaching in this tenth chapter of Romans. However, he refers to it only to prove his point that everyone hears the word of Christ to some extent (John 1:9)

If that is true, what happened to the Jews? Why aren't they accepting Jesus as the Messiah? If God put it in our heart and mouth, and nature and the evangelist proclaim it, which gives us faith to confess and believe, then why aren't more Jews doing so? Once again Paul will make His case from the Old Testament Scriptures. ¹⁹ But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are

not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."

In the next chapter, Paul will tell us that the reason for God using the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy is so that some of them might be saved. You'll recall that in a previous passage Paul referred to Hosea's child named, "not my people" (Romans 9:25). This was in reference to God rejecting the Jews because of idolatry. In this verse in Romans, "not a nation" (no people) is referring to the church in a passage in Deuteronomy 32:21. Just as the Jews had provoked God by gods that were no gods (idolatry), so God would provoke them to jealousy by a people that were "no people". He would make them angry with a people void of understanding, which is those who did not previously have the Word of God.

Paul applies the "no people" or "not a nation" to the Jew and Gentile that had become a part of the body of Christ. Here were these zealous Christians that disregarded the boundaries that religious Jews set up to separate themselves from Gentiles. They were fervent followers of God and Jesus Christ. They had a relationship with God that was so personal and intimate that it made the Jews jealous. They were even angry that these who didn't study all the oral traditions would claim they knew the Messiah and the Jews had missed Him. "Of all the nerve! Who did they think they were?"

²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." Paul is quoting

Commented [notes21]: Romans 1:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Commented [notes24]: Romans 9:25 (ESV)

²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,'" and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"

Commented [notes25]: Deuteronomy 32:21 (ESV)

²¹ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

Commented [notes22]: Psalm 19:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Commented [notes23]: John 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Isaiah 65:1. Those Gentiles who weren't memorizing Scripture and even followed the pantheism of the Greeks now claim that God had chosen them. It was a really hard pill for Jews to swallow. But there it was, predicted in Scripture. This salvation included all people around the world, for none seek after God (Romans 3:11). God's Spirit reaches out and convicts of sin and righteousness. The word of Christ is seen in creation and hopefully heard from the evangelist as well. That stirs up faith to confess and believe what God has already put in their heart and mouth. The revelation of the redeeming Savior transforms a life from the inside out.

²¹ But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." This time Paul is quoting Isaiah 65:2, the verse following his previous quote. In that passage, the LORD was rebuking Israel for her idolatry, while at the same time Israel was saying, "Don't come near me. I am too holy for you." Isaiah 65:5 How could the Jewish reader respond? This was about their ancestors and they knew it. It would make them angry, but it would also make them face the fact that they might be doing the very thing their ancestors were guilty of. Yet the invitation is clear. His hands are held out to them in spite of their sin. They are the hands that were pierced for their salvation (Zechariah 12:10). They are the same hands that are held out to you and me in spite of our sin.

In war torn Syria and Muslim dominated Nazareth, great statues of Christ with outstretched arms like the one in Rio De

Janeiro are being erected. The outstretched hands of Jesus pictured by these statues are so symbolic of this verse. Jesus is stretching out hands of invitation to Jews and Muslims and all people everywhere. He puts the words in our mouth and heart (Romans 10:8). He proclaims the message that we might have faith and believe. He provokes them to jealousy by the peace and joy of the true believer.

Do you have that peace and joy that come from intimacy with Jesus (Philippians 4:7)? Are you provoking anyone to jealousy by your relationship with God? Let us not be guilty of provoking people in arrogance or out of duty, but with the love of Christ. We speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15) It is the Holy Spirit's job to bring conviction of sin (John 16:8). We should be winsome to win some. Is your relationship with the Lord such that it provokes others to jealousy? His hands are held out to you and me.

Questions

- 1 On whom does God bestow His riches?
- 2 What does "call on the name of the Lord" mean?
- 3 Do we need to proclaim the gospel?
- 4 How did Paul apply Isaiah 52?
- 5 What does verse 17 mean?
- 6 What about those who haven't heard?
- 7 How does Psalm 19 line up with this chapter?
- 8 Who are "not a nation"?
- 9 How does Paul apply Isaiah 65:1-2?
- 10 To whom are the Lord's hands held out?

Commented [notes28]: Romans 10:8 (ESV)

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

Commented [notes26]: Romans 3:11 (ESV)

¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.

Commented [notes29]: Philippians 4:7 (ESV)

⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Commented [notes30]: Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Commented [notes31]: John 16:8 (ESV)

⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

Commented [notes27]: Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.