

Topic	The Gospel – Our Response and Responsibility
Reference	Romans 10:8-17
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The good news of having a baby brings a response of joy and thankfulness and glad acceptance, it also brings in responsibility. When we talk about a good news, we also want to show the good news. When good news happens, it makes a difference in your life.

There is a good news of gospel that we had and that's exactly what the word gospel means, it means good news and when we hear the gospel, question then come how do we respond. What are the responsibilities that come with receiving this good news of the gospel.

DEFINITION OF GOSPEL:

The GOSPEL is GOOD NEWS, that's what it means in the original language. It specifically is a good news about what God has done and even more specifically is what God has done through Jesus Christ, especially through his crucifixion & resurrection. Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins, was raised in victory over death and victory over sin, death and hell and then after the crucifixion and resurrection ascended to heaven, seated at the right hand of God, showing that he has been exalted. He is lord and he is reigning. That's good news. The good news continues because the good news is also God's promise of forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with Him and eternal life to all who repent and believe.

There is also a response to the good news that brings even more good news as we receive reconciliation with God. One of my favorite scripture passages that would very briefly summarize the high points of the gospel is 1-Cor 15:3-4.

*I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, He was buried, He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and He appeared to (many witnesses)*

When we hear the good news, how do you respond. Let's first of all look at the words of Jesus about whom the good news relates and who is the one who gives us the salvation because of the good news.

*Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe** in the gospel (the Good News)." Mark 1:14-15*

That's the response that Jesus says we have to make of the good news. Yes, the gospel is good news but sometimes we forget about how good it is, especially if you have been in church for a long time and you have heard this since you were a child, and you forget how wonderful the good news is. Many years ago when I was in my early 20s, I was working for two years in West

Africa teaching at a school there. There were a lot of villages that are setup in the hills. There were a lot of village down the road and you have one village after another, after another connected by a foot path. My colleague was walking through these villages one time and he came to one of the villages, he met the chief and he sat down with the chief by the side of the road which was the middle of the village and started explaining to him the gospel message and he was talking the chief exclaimed, "that's good news!" and my colleague continued as he continued explaining. Pretty soon as my colleague was explaining, since the path was right through the middle of the village, somebody going to another village came through and as he was walking by the chief said, "hey stop, you need to hear this man has brought us good news". My colleague got to start all over again. Before he could finish somebody else came by and the chief stopped him and said, "hey, you got to stop. Listen, this man has brought us good news".

Sometimes we forget how good the good news is. Paul in the book of Romans helps us to realize how good the good news is because before he gets to the text it shows us how bad the bad news is and to realize how good the Good News is we need to be reminded that there is bad news. Paul has already told us,

1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness

That bad news and in case we might be thinking that we are not so bad, Paul points out that we all have sinned and we all fall short of the glory of God and he also points out the wages of sin is death. That's not only physical death, it is also spiritual death and it is eternal death in hell. That's really bad news. Before we get to our text today, Paul has also contrasted that with the good news. He has pointed out that

5:8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

He has pointed out that the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord and that when we are in Christ there is now no more condemnation. Because Paul has already clearly presented the heart of the gospel message that Christ was delivered up, where he died for our sins, for our trespasses and he was raised for our justification.

So in the first several chapters of Romans we have seen the bad news, we have seen the good news and now in our text for today, we are going to look at the response to this good news, as well as the responsibilities we have when we accept this good news.

OUR RESPONSE:

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The end of the verse is once again emphasizing the gospel message. Now Paul earlier has stated the gospel message in more length, here is just briefly summarized with the high point of

being raised from the dead, but the belief in God raising Jesus from the dead of course also includes believing in the crucifixion as he died for our sins, being raised from the dead. It would include being raised in the ascension to heaven and being exalted at the right hand of God as Lord. So at the end of the verse Paul is emphasizing the gospel message and earlier in the verse he is emphasizing our response. Notice he says that faith is crucial.

When we talk about belief and faith, sometimes people don't understand what the Bible is talking about because sometimes we tend to equate faith with mental ascent, like I believe that fact is true and this fact is true and then that's all there is, but there is more to faith than just knowing facts.

Believing facts but don't let it affect your life, that's not faith. Our text doesn't say, just believe with our head, our text says, believe in your heart because faith affects our entire life. It will change our hearts. Believing with the heart produces a change in heart, produces a change in our life. Faith and repentance go together. We really cannot separate the two. We already saw that in the words of Jesus when we saw Jesus call at the beginning of his ministry that people should repent and believe the gospel. Not only did Jesus preached that, that's exactly what Paul preached. Shortly after Paul wrote the book of Romans, he was meeting with the Ephesian elders and he was summarizing his ministry and this is what he said

I testified both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21)

Paul preached this message to everybody, Jewish or gentiles. The message he preached is that people should repent. Now repentance is also one of those words that's sometimes misunderstood, some people think, well if I stop doing this or stop doing that then I will be okay, but this is not repentance. Repentance begins on the inside, the word for repentance really means a change of our thinking, which goes more than just the mind, it goes to the heart. A change of our heart with the genuine sorrow for our sin and a deep desire to be right with God, to glorify him, to live for him. It will bring about a change of our heart which brings change in our values, our priorities, our goals, our dreams and desires and because there is a change on the inside of our thinking of our heart that brings about a change in direction of our life and the inner changes will now bring changes in our lifestyle and now where there are some things that we might need to quit doing, there are some things we need to begin doing, we will be doing it because there has been a change on the inside and we were wanting to go in a new direction. So Paul preached repentance and he preached faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The two go together and it make sense. If you are going to turn to God in faith, that means you need to turn away from something in order to turn to something or someone. Paul in talking about his call to the ministry, he was talking to a king that he was on trial before and he was giving his testimony and he said that

*Acts 26:17 ... I am sending you to the Gentiles 18 to open their eyes, so that they may **turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by **faith** in me.' 19 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I*

was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

So you turn in repentance to God in faith. That's what believing with the heart is all about, not only do we know the facts but we also experience a change of heart as we repent and believing from our heart includes that we entrust our lives to God, asking Him to take control of our lives and lead us, we trust God with our lives. Faith includes acknowledging that Jesus is Lord.

Confessing Jesus as Lord is not just empty words, Lord is not just like a Title, it goes deeper than that. It is a confession and acknowledgement that Jesus is the rightful Lord, master of my life like Thomas said after the resurrection my Lord, my God. A personal acknowledgement that Jesus is now reigning as Lord of your life. Not only in church among fellow believers but a profession that Jesus is Lord will be visible and evident in our life as we go about daily life. Paul was writing to the Romans, when Paul wrote there was not yet severe Christian persecution in Rome but God who inspired Paul to write this knew that in just a very short time after this letter was written there would be strong persecution in Rome, inspired Paul to write, confess Jesus as Lord and when the persecution broke out a few years later in Rome that statement alone could cost you not only your livelihood, it could cost you your life. Remember the words of Jesus,

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

So we confess the reality that we have a personal relationship with Jesus as the Lord of our life, we allow him to take control of our life that's included in saving faith, that's the response that God wants us to make to the good news of who Jesus is, we recognize that he is Lord and ask him to be our Lord.

Few years ago we were travelling throughout India and in one area we were in, there was a pretty strong movement to faith in Christ, many people with the Hindu background were coming to faith and we were working with a group of maybe 40-45 pastors, who had seen really tremendous growth. I was talking to one of the leaders in this movement and this person told me, we are trying to be very careful because you see many people have prayed for healing and God has healed them, so all of these people that are seeing the power of God and they are seeing that Jesus is the healer, they want to accept Jesus as their healer but they want to keep their other idols and they thought about Jesus being the savior where you repent of your sin and confess your sin to him, they are not always interested or the part that Jesus is Lord and you need to bow before him and acknowledge him as the Lord of their life, they are not interested, they want Jesus to be their healer.

We might smile and think that's impossible, you cannot divide Jesus up, accept the parts you like and reject the parts you don't like. That's exactly what some evangelicals try to do. Jesus didn't approach it that way, Paul did not approach it that way, Peter did not approach it that

way, you don't pick and choose what you like about Jesus and reject the rest. Faith in Jesus includes bowing our knee before him. In Philippians it says, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and you will not enter heaven if you have never bowed the knee before Jesus.

In saving faith, a person hears the gospel message, he is convinced that it is true and then he totally yields his life to God in faith in response to the gospel. That's the response that God wants us to make and then there is more good news, we don't make this response in our own strength. God is the one who makes it possible for us to respond. God provides the way of salvation through Jesus and not only that he makes it possible for us to respond in faith, because we cannot do it on our own. The power of God is evidenced through his word and also through his Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

God's word, the scripture, the gospel message of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection, message of God's grace, his love, his mercy that brings faith when we hear it and it is not just the word about Christ, it is Christ himself speaking to us through his word, Christ will speak to the hearts of people that enables a faith response.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,

Yes, it is important that we share the gospel so people can hear, so they can respond in faith, it is important that we say it with conviction and try to give the best reasons possible to persuade people but ultimately it is the spirit of God that convicts them of the truth of the message and we see in John

John 16:8 And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

We share the scripture in the power of the Holy Spirit and then God is the one that makes this response of repentance and faith possible. So we have seen the response to God that we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, we believe with our heart.

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

Then Paul goes ahead to say something that I am sure was quite controversial

*12 For there is **no difference** 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."*

We like to divide the world up into us and them. The Jewish people say, we are God's chosen people, everybody else is a heathen. The gentiles were just as bad. Greeks say, we are civilized, we are sophisticated and we are better than everybody else, everybody else is a barbarian. In the Roman church, there were both Jews and Greeks, people from totally different backgrounds, not only ethnically but also religiously. No difference as Paul is saying.

We might argue that there is a difference but God says otherwise, there is no difference. Same Lord is the Lord of all, bestowed his riches on all who call on him or everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now when Paul said, there is no difference, this is not the first time he has used this phrase in the book of romans. There is one other time he has used this phrase, the exact words even in the Greek the exact same phrase, there is no difference.

There is no difference for all have sinned.

That is what levels people before God. We see differences, God sees we have all sinned. There is no difference, all have sinned but the good news is, there is no difference that everybody, all who call on the name of the Lord in faith will be saved. So this is indeed good news. There is no difference, everybody is able to call on the Lord and be saved.

So when we see that, we might say Hallelujah, let's go home, but Paul doesn't stop there. After this wonderful good news, he goes on to ask some rhetorical questions that can be quite troubling because even though it is true that everybody who calls on the Lord will be saved he asks a question

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?

He doesn't give the answer, because the answer is so obvious. How are you going to call in faith on somebody you don't believe in, you can't you are not going to do it. How are you going to believe in somebody you have never even heard of? It's impossible, you cannot. How are you going to hear if nobody told you, you cannot, it's impossible. So we have good news, everybody that calls on the lord can be saved but the reality is vast majority of people will not be able to call on the name of the lord because they have never heard, because we have not told them. So now we begin to see not only our response to the gospel which is to believe with our heart and acknowledge Christ as Lord but we are also beginning to see our responsibility that comes with accepting the gospel that of sharing the good news with other people.

The word preaching is referring to heralding or announcing the good news, the gospel message. That is something we can all do. Basically, telling somebody what God has done for you, explaining to somebody how they can come to faith in Jesus Christ, so it is not an ordained person that stands up on the stage and talks for a long time, it is an average ordinary person, every person who is a follower of Jesus Christ can go and preach.

How are they going to preach unless they are sent?

We might ask what does it mean to be sent. We might even think that it counts me out because I am not sent, wrong again. Look at what Jesus told to his disciples and if we accept Jesus we are now one of his disciples

John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

So when we see it is important for people to preach, to share the news, it is important that they be sent, we see that Jesus has sent all of his followers to share the good news. We see this also in Matthew's gospel where he tells his followers,

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

He is sending them; he is sending us. So our responsibility once we have believed and accepted the good news of the gospel is to share this good news with other people. Now there will be some people that God sends to other places in the world like God sent Paul on several missionary journeys to basically the entire known world at the time. Jesus told his disciples, first of all begin in your hometown and that is something we can all do.

Luke 24:47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in My name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Beginning right where you are and that's is where Jesus sending us today to the people around us, here in our hometown. Even though God had sent Paul to many places around the world, he still had a strong burden for his own country man and Paul's burden for his own countryman is a great example for each one of us today.

Romans 10:1 My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

In those words, you can just feel the anguish, the sorrow of his soul that his countryman does not know God. Earlier Paul had even said in chapter 9, if it were possible I would be willing to perish in hell if that would bring salvation for all of my countryman, of course that is not possible, but that is his heart's desire. He is willing to do anything any everything so that his people could come to faith in Christ.

Do we have such a desire, is our hearts desire like Paul's, a deep burning desire for your countryman to be saved?

So that will lead to action. Paul prayed to God that they could be saved and not just prayer in general, but think of some specific people that might be in your circle of acquaintances. Who do you know that does not know God that you could pray for specifically, ask God to give you

the names or show the faces of people that you could possibly have influence on and then pray for them. Pray with this burning desire that they come to faith, pray that God would work in their hearts and pray that God would give you an opportunity to share with them.

Paul goes ahead and he says,

Romans 10: 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Your countrymen are also not different, ignorant of the truth, but some of them really zealous for God, trying to establish their own righteousness rather than God's and so we see people going through religious rituals and religious practices, trying to get right with God. We see people offering sacrifices, even punishing their bodies, wanting to try to somehow be right with the gods or they do rituals to try to appease the gods with the spirits and you don't have to travel to the ends of the world to find this, they are right here in your neighborhood. So all believers have the responsibility to share the good news of Jesus Christ, share the news of salvation through faith.

Jesus said to go to the ends of the earth, one person cannot go to the ends of the earth but we can help support others that do. So our involvement in mission projects, whether it is through prayer, whether it is through finances, whether it is through encouraging other people, we can be involved in sending in that way also. That verse concludes as it is written,

15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Few years ago we are attending a seminar on Easter Sunday evening in a very restricted country. In that service church planters, evangelist from a wide area had travelled, some of them several hundred kilometres to get there. Poor people, almost all were bivocational pastors, what they did for a living was farming. So many of them when they farm, they are out in these fields, pushing a primitive plough behind an ox and usually going barefoot. So when they come into the worship service, they kick off their sandals and you see these dirty feet, callused feet, sometimes blisters on the feet, sometimes even sores on the feet and that Sunday morning there was a foot washing service.

To be honest, I didn't see any feet that I would consider to be beautiful that Sunday morning, but later in the week I was talking to a man who had been walking with those ugly feet back to a tribal area and he had been sharing the gospel in several villages and many people had come to faith in Christ. As a matter of fact, so many people had come to faith in Christ that some of the religious leaders have told him, if you baptize anybody else we are going to baptize you and you will not be coming up. So here they are threatening his life. I asked him, what you are going to do? He said, I am going to continue going to those people. He knew that if those people had the chance to hear the gospel, some would call on the Lord in faith and he knew if

they did not hear they will not be able to call on the Lord in faith. So despite threats to his life, he continued going back to share with these people.

So this morning we have talked about the gospel, the good news. Our response is to believe with our heart, acknowledging Christ as Lord. Our responsibility is to share the good news with others because we are sent. We also have to send and support others that God is calling in ministries that go beyond our reach.