



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

How Someone is Saved - (Romans 10:12-15)

Pastor Jeff Bucknam

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

One of the most famous names in modern missions (when I say that I'm referring to someone who is a missionary over the last 100 years) in North America anyways, one of the most famous names is a guy named Jim Elliot. Some of you will know that name. Jim Elliot died, in fact, as a martyr in 1956, on the shores of a riverbank in South America. He died at the hands of the very people he was trying to reach with the gospel. He and his friends had decided, very gifted people, in fact he had graduated from Wheaton College. People had thought at that time that he was going to be one of the next great pastors, preachers, around. Kind of in the Billy Graham mold. Jim Elliot instead, though, chose to go and reach the unreached. And by unreached, I mean the people that, you know, sometimes you see those videos where someone's flying in a helicopter above a rainforest from Brazil and they see these people walking through the clearing, and then they say, "Oh my goodness, there's people who live there. They've never had any touch with the outside world." That's the kind of people we're talking about. The Auca Indians is who they identified, that Jim Elliot and his team decided they were going to reach. These people had never heard the name of Christ, they had never actually had any kind of interaction much with outside people at all. So in order to make this happen, Jim Elliot and his team flew an airplane, a small aircraft, above a riverbank where they knew that these people lived. They put a loudspeaker on the outside of the airplane and they just circled the riverbank. When they'd see people come out, they would speak to them, the very few phrases they knew from a girl who from that community had come out and gotten to know them. And they were friendly phrases like, "We're here as your friends." And then as a sign of that, they would drop out of the plane these baskets of rock salt and buttons. I don't know why the buttons, you know? But apparently that was a very helpful thing to them. They had the information, of course, from this girl that they knew, that rock salt and buttons was what the people could really use.

After a while—they did this several days, weeks, circling this riverbank. They ended up finding things left on the riverbank in response. And so they would land their plane, they would go down, and they'd pick up these gifts, these baskets. Some local food and hand-carved goods and things like that. And they thought, oh, we're making contact. Well, after a while, this went on, and they tried to set up a meeting through the loudspeaker, saying, "Can we meet you on this riverbank on a Wednesday? [I don't know how you say "Wednesday."] We'll meet you on this riverbank." So they landed, they brought a whole bunch more gifts. They laid them out on the riverbank wanting to give it to the people who were going to come out...nobody came. So they set up their loudspeaker and they spoke into the jungle, toward the direction where they knew the people came from. And they announced the phrases



again. “We are here to be your friends, we’ll be here until you come.” Finally, after about three days, there was a young woman and her boyfriend, we learned later, who were the typical rebellious children in the community who said, “Well, the rest of you don’t want to go? We’re going!” And they went out and met with them. The boyfriend, when they met the missionaries, could not keep his eyes off the plane. What an amazing machine! So he would put his hand on the plane, and he would walk around the plane, and finally Nate Saint, the pilot, said, “Would you like a ride?” “Yeah!” And up they go. And they start circling, they go over the village, or the clearing near the village, where this guy recognized it, and this guy was almost climbing out the window of the plane, screaming down at his friends, “Look at me! I’m flying!” Land the plane, he wanted to go again. Okay, again.

Well, because of this report, some more people came out, and they went for plane rides. And then they disappeared for a couple days. We learned later, of course, that what was happening in the village was that they were trying to determine whether these people were actually friendly or not. Or that they were setting them up so they could come and invade the village and kill them all. That suspicious view is the one that won out in the end. And so the leaders of the village said, “What we’re going to do is have a preemptive strike. Before they can come in here and kill us, we’re going to kill them.” So they went to the riverbank the next morning, missionaries thinking that everything had gone so well up to this point, right? They got to the riverbank and separated the missionaries out with friendly conversation and pretending to be buddies, and then from the other side of the river, in the trees, came hoards of men with spears and clubs and rocks. And they speared Jim Elliot to death on that riverbank. His blood flowed together with the waters. Nate Saint was speared to death and clubbed in the head.

The pictures of their dead bodies along that river went international. This is before the days of the Internet, right? So they were in *Life* magazine. Most of the people who responded to that story said a similar thing: “What a waste. Like, this is ridiculous. They went down there to do this particular act, to save these people, to preach the gospel, why are they doing this?” Was it a waste? Is self-sacrificing missions a waste? Well, your answer to that question is going to depend largely upon your viewpoint of the plight of the unevangelized. And by unevangelized, I mean the people who have never heard the gospel preached ever. So, there’s a theological viewpoint that you come to that question with. If you believe, for example, the universalist take, which is that in the end, basically everyone’s going to be okay. That God, in his mercy, is so kind and gracious, that it doesn’t matter whether someone’s responded to Christ in this life or not. God is just going to lavish his mercy on everyone, and ultimately, everyone’s going to be okay. If you believe that, the only real missions that you should be focused on are the alleviation of temporary suffering, yes? Like poverty or the lack of water, or those sorts of things. All very important things, but as a universalist, that’s what missions should be. So, yes, this was a waste. Trying to preach the gospel to these people’s a waste. They’re already saved anyway.

There are others within the Christian church who say, “Nah, universalism, that’s not true.” And they would call themselves inclusivists. And what they say is, listen. The way that God’s going to judge people in the end is, he’s going to judge them based upon how they responded to whatever light they



had. Whatever revelation they had. And so if they don't have the revelation of Christianity and they had the revelation of, say, Buddhism, if they're really good Buddhists, we could call them (as C.S. Lewis did) "anonymous Christians." So, God's going to save based just upon their response to whatever revelation they had. And some will have good responses and some will have bad. But most people are going to be okay, because most people are committed to whatever viewpoint they have. Whatever revelation they've been given.

And then there's the third view, which is really the most common view in the history of the church, and that is, no, you actually need to believe upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in particular to be saved. So if you don't have that name, the goal of the church in the world is to get you that name. To *send*, so that you can hear. Does Scripture, you think, give a clear answer to those options? I'm going to argue, actually, that this one does. That Romans 10:12-15 gives a clear answer to the question, what is required to happen in order for a person to be saved? What needs to happen in order for them to stand before God justified in the final judgement? I know, we've been, in the last number of weeks, been right into all the theology, and it's going to happen again here, okay? Just so you know, so put your little thinking hats on; we're going to dive right in. It's not my fault, Paul's the one who keeps writing all this stuff down. At some point you're like, come on Paul, just tell a story already! But, here we go. Here's the outline, how this passage plays out. Paul's argument for what's required to happen in order for a person to be saved. They need to call on the name on the Lord, so calling, they need to believe upon his name, they need to hear through the preaching of the word, and they need someone to send them someone, in order that they can hear. So, calling, believing, hearing through preaching, and sending. You'll see Paul's argument, he links these together. One after another after another. It's a very clear passage of Scripture. Here we go.

[Calling]

The first of these, calling. Romans 10:12-13,

"For there is no difference [says Paul] between Jew and Gentile—[in other words, what I'm about to say, applies to everyone, regardless of where you're from. I don't care how you self-identify. In that world it was two kinds of people: Jews and Gentiles. I don't care if you think, I'm blonde, I'm tall, I'm small, whatever. Everyone this applies to, there's no different between Jew and Gentile.] the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, [and he says, I'm going to quote the Old Testament here now] 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

So, how are you saved? You need to *call* on the name of the Lord. What does that mean? What does it mean to call on the name of someone? Well, if you were here last week, here at the Downes Road campus, you would have heard Ezra preach. And he told a story, it's an imaginary story, about moving a piano. So I want to pick up on that idea. If you weren't here, it's okay. Imagine you're moving a piano. You've got to move it down the stairs of your house, and if you don't have stairs, imagine stairs. [Laughter] Okay? So, we're going to move this piano down the stairs of your house. You've brought your friends over, right, or at least those who answered the phone and who didn't have a better



excuse, or couldn't come up with one quickly when you asked them to move the piano. So there they are, the least quick-witted among them, and they are moving your piano with you. And you're moving this thing down the stairs, and you've invited me over, of course you have, and of course I've said yes because I'm not very quick-witted. So, I'm standing there, and I'm doing what I would do if this actually happened: I'm directing the traffic. I'm not going to lift this piano for you. So I'm going to stand there at the bottom of the stairs and say, "Okay, you've got to move it down. Pivot! Pivot! You're going to come down the stairs." You get to the bottom of your stairs, you know that part where you've got to turn to get it out the front door. So there you are at the bottom of your stairs, and you're about to turn this piano, and you know what starts happening. Every time anyone ever moves pianos, unless you're a professional, it starts to slip. It starts to come out of your hands. You've got 15 people around it, and it starts to slip. And in that moment where it's slipping, and I'm standing over there saying, "You know, you're not doing very well." I'm standing over there and I see it slipping, my hands are crossed over my chest, you look at me and you say, "Jeff! Help!" And what have you done? Well, you've called on the name of Jeff. [Laughter] That he might save you.

Okay, maybe a better image, you send your children down those stairs, piano's still there, you send your children down the stairs and you say, "Son, I would like you to go down to the freezer and I would like you to bring up the chicken. You do know the difference between chicken and other meats, yes son? The chicken is the one that looks pinkish and says 'chicken' on the side. [Laughter] It's right in the front of the freezer. I put it there the other day. Can you go down and get the chicken? We're going to make chicken for dinner." So your son walks down the stairs, after giving you grief, walks down the stairs, and then he goes into the freezer, and he's gone for like, three, four, five minutes. And you're thinking to yourself, where did he go? Did he go for a walk around the block? Did he like what is he doing? Did he fall asleep on his way there? And you hear after five minutes, "Mom! Dad! I can't find the chicken!" And you're like, "The chicken's right in the middle of the freezer! Just look at it! Open your eyes!"

"I still can't find it!" And you eventually, of course, have to go down and you have to show him that it's actually right in front of his face. Right? Because he's stupid, and they can't see these things. [Laughter] What is he doing when he's standing in front of this freezer, though, and yelling, "Mom! Dad!" He is calling on the name of his mom and dad in order that they might save him. The image is clear here. To call on the name of the Lord is to recognize one's inability in the situation you find yourself. Namely, life. To call on the name of the Lord and to say, "I cannot do this. There is no way for me to sort all this out, and so I cry out. This is slipping through my fingers. I can't see forward to accomplish the thing you've called me to do. Help, Lord! Help!" You call on the name of the Lord.

So you get stories about this kind of thing in the New Testament. Jesus tells a parable, what does it look like for someone to be saved and justified? So he tells a story about a Pharisee, a really religious guy, and a tax collector, the dirt-ball of the society. Like, Nazi-sympathizer level dirt-ball. And they're going to the temple to worship the Lord. And the Pharisee walks forward and says, "Oh God, I am so thankful that I am who I am. Look at me! I'm amazing. I give the right amounts, I care for people the right amounts, my family's in a great situation, my house and yard and everything is perfect. I'm thankful that I'm like me and not like that guy over there, that tax collector, because I can't imagine



what it would be like to be him and everyone to hate me like they hate him. So Father, thank you that I am who I am.”

“Tax collector, of course, stands at a distance,” says Jesus, “and he keeps his head down, he won’t even lift his head to heaven, and he pounds his chest and he says, ‘Oh God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” And Jesus says, “It’s this tax collector, not the Pharisee, who is going to go home justified.” Why? Because the tax collector called on the name of the Lord. Why did he call? Because he recognized that he does not have it together, man. He sees his inability. Oswald Chambers once said that the greatest gift God can ever give a man is the knowledge of his own destitution. That’s right. The greatest gift God can ever give a man is the knowledge of his own destitution. Because it’s out of that destitution that you’re going to call on the name of the Lord.

My friend Paul worked as a pastor with me in New Zealand. He told me one day about how he came to faith in Christ. He didn’t really grow up much in a Christian family, and he kind of started to come to interest in the things about Jesus because there was a guy who was sitting next to him in his classroom when he was in high school. And they would sometimes do these projects, but during the times before the projects needed to start, this guy would strike up conversations and ask him about his thinking about spiritual matters. And what do you think of the afterlife, and all sorts of stuff. And so Paul would put him off at first, but then after a while, they started to have more conversations about it. After about three, four months of this constant, kind of intermittent conversation, Paul finally opened up and said, “I don’t know what I think about all this sort of thing, but I tell you what, this Jesus that you’re talking about, there’s no way that I’m going to give my life over to him. I’m doing just fine.” Of course, Paul said, at the time when he was telling me, he said, “I know that God heard that at that moment, and said, ‘Really? Let me show you how fine you’re doing.’”

And so his girlfriend, like the next day, broke up with him. One of his parents had a major health problem. His father lost his job, there’s a series of all sorts of things that all happened at that moment, and Paul’s “fine” quickly became “un-fine.” He was in tears for his own life, tears for the life of his family. He did not know what he was going to be doing in the future, these plans that he had had for all these years had now been thrown to the wind, and so he said, “I ran one night, in the dark, I ran a mile. Like, just out in the middle of-in my jeans. I was running, and I stopped at the tennis court.” He actually showed me where it was. He made me stand in the spot one day. He said, “I stopped at this tennis court, I crumpled down on the ground right here, and I finally realized, I am not fine. And that if I’m held responsible for my future, it’s going to go very, very badly. And so, in that moment,” he said, “I cried out. Loudly. ‘God! Help!’” Yes, call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. You ever done that? I know you come to church all the time, I get that. But had you ever tax collector-ed it? My Pharisee friends? Just said, “I can’t do it! Lord, I can’t do it.” The one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[Believing]

But how do you call? What needs to happen prior to calling that helps you to call? Paul helps us here, verse 14, this is the second part here. You need to believe in order to call. Romans 10:14,



“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?”

So, calling is a product of belief. In order for an outward call to happen, an inward belief must first happen. You will only call on one who you believe can help, right? So, let's go back to our image together with moving the piano. And I want to add a little piece to it, okay? This time, you've invited me and Jonathan, our worship pastor. You guys saw Jonathan earlier. The things we would describe Jonathan as, some characteristics, are that he's really intelligent, bright guy. Scrawny, right? A good wind would probably blow him away. So Jonathan, you invite Jonathan over and me, and we're both standing there because we like to direct things. He brought his guitar, we don't know why. [Laughter] <Singing> Move that piano... <In normal voice> So you move the piano down, it starts to slip out of your hands, and you have this moment where time slows down and you look over and there I am, with my arms folded, and there's Jonathan, you barely see him, right, because he's sideways. [Laughter] And you say to yourself, help! And then you have to pick a name. “Help Jeff!” Right? Because that's what you're going to pick here. Jeff. You don't pick Jonathan because in your mind you're thinking to yourself, what's it going to help? He doesn't have the capabilities of helping in this moment. Jeff does. You send your son down the stairs and he goes, and he's going to get the chicken. And there he is, and in that moment, where he has to call out for help, he does not call his brother. Because his brother's as dumb as he is, right? Who's he-he calls Mom, he calls Dad. Why? Because Mom and Dad have the ability to help. Jeff has the ability to help. Jesus has the ability to help. See how I'm Jesus in this story? You saw that? [Laughter] In order to call on Jesus, you have to believe certain things about him. There's certain characteristics that he has that gives him the ability to help.

So what is that? What is it about Jesus that gives him the ability to help? Now, there's lots that we could say. He's God, right? He's the sufficient sacrifice for our sins. But Paul in the verses immediately prior to this one, identifies what it is about Jesus that gives him the ability to help. Just look at Romans 10:9, he says,

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

So the belief that Jesus is Lord and God raised him from the dead. That's what you need to believe about him. That language though, ooh. That Jesus is Lord? Listen, it didn't say that Jesus is my buddy, that Jesus is my friend. Jesus is the butler who's going to come when I call. No, he's Lord. That's slave language, guys. That's what he's drawing on. That's master and slave imagery that he's playing with. You should not be surprised by that kind of image coming from Paul, because if you go to the beginning of the book of Romans, the second word in the book is, this book is from Paul, a “slave of Jesus Christ.” If you asked Paul, what defines your relationship to God? “Well, he's my master and I am his slave.” That language is all over the New Testament. But the image might be a little bit different than you think.

So, let me share with you an image. This is an apocryphal story, I'm sure it's an apocryphal story. It was told to me when I was young, and I heard it from a preacher, and preachers love to tell stories that aren't true, so, I'm sure it's apocryphal, okay? It's about Abraham Lincoln. I've shared it before, a long



time ago here. Just to give you an idea about what it looks like to be Christ's slave. What does it mean? Well, the story goes that Abraham Lincoln was so incensed by the slave trade in the United States that he actually had to go and witness what went on first hand at the buying and the selling of the slaves when they came off the boat from Africa. So he went to the docks. Lincoln and some of his entourage were there. And they stood at the back of a large group of gathered men, and the men were bidding on the property, the meat, the men and women who were coming off the slave ships. And what they would do is they would bring these slaves off, and they would, in shackles, they would lead them to the end of the dock and surrounding the dock would be these men, and then of course, they would ask questions about how big they are, how small they are, how healthy they are, all those things. They could see that, and sometimes they'd walk up and they'd smack their muscles to see how healthy they were, and then they'd start the bidding. Lincoln was watching this happen, you know? People being bought. And then gathered together and smacked and whipped and all sorts of things in order to get them to submit to their new boss. Their new master.

Well, Lincoln saw this one man, actually, this one black, muscular, capable man, who had avoided all the emaciation that often happened on those slave ships. You know, people would die, and they'd just throw them over the side of the ship. But this guy remained healthy. And they walked him out to the end of the dock. And of course, the crowd gasped, "Ooh." Because he looked so strong. The slave owners were thinking, if I buy him, he's going to be worth two, three, four, other slaves, and so immediately when the bidding started, it shot right up. It was four or five different people bidding. This man, this black man had his head down. Despite his strength he was quivering. Partly out of anger, partly out of fear. For some reason, Lincoln's heart connected particularly to this guy. He'd seen this scene long enough, and Lincoln just decided, I cannot let this happen here. I can't let this happen. And so he started to bid. He trumped all the others' bids, and then they went higher, and then he went higher, and they went higher, and then of course, several of them faded away, and it was just Lincoln and this other man in the front who already had like, six or seven other slaves behind him, whom he treated viciously up to this point. And they bid and bid, and Lincoln was so determined, he said, "I will not let this man win." And he didn't let that man win. He won that bidding. "Sold!" they said, "to the man in the back." They led this large, black man down the steps and through the crowd, and the crowd parted like a sea. And he came straight to Lincoln in his shackles and his head down, expecting of course, to be beaten with whips now at this point, just to make him submit like all the others had. But Lincoln, when the man got to his front, told the guards who were holding him, "Unshackle him." And they did. And the man still wouldn't look. So Lincoln grabbed his chin and he lifted it up to him. And then he said, looking eye to eye now, he said to him, "Listen, you need to know that I bought you to free you. You can go anywhere you want to go. You can be anyone you want to be." So long pause, and this man, as he started to realize what had just happened, and his wrists were free, and he was not being beaten or expected anything of, it started to occur to him that this man had bought him now at a price, and had now freed him to do what he wanted to do. And he looked around, and with tears in eyes, he said, not knowing anyone, he said to Lincoln, "Well, if you bought me to free me, then I choose to go with you."

Now look, I don't know if that's true. But here's the thing about it. That's precisely the image of how Christ has treated you. He bought you with a price. He freed you. And your response to him of



willingful servanthood and slavery, he you master, you his slave, is not one you do with a chin down in frustration and, oh no, he's going to demand things of me I don't want to do. It's one with joy. This one loves me. He's always loved me. He will always love me. He will always lead me into pleasant places. Even though it might not look it at the time. He will always seek my best, right? Is he your Lord? When you call upon the name of the Lord, is that your attitude? Listen, I don't know what the future holds, Lord. I don't know how I'm going to get through. But you do, and I will go wherever you say, I will do whatever you call.

[Hearing Through Preaching]

Calling, believing, but how do you believe? Well, you've got to hear through preaching. Romans 10:14, the second part of verse 14,

“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

I have a friend in the Middle East, he's worked as a missionary there for a number of years, and he tells a story that you could probably find in several places. Not just his story. This is something that's happening quite frequently in the Middle East these days among Muslims. The Muslim population there. My friend rides the bus everyday to his office. And after a while, in this Middle Eastern city, he was riding the bus, and the guy across from him was the same guy everyday. They apparently went somewhere very similar, they got on in similar places, they rode for like 45 minutes, and they got off in similar places. And so my friend said, “Well, one day I just decided I would sit next to him. He was a little put off by it. But we had seen each other so often,” my friend said, “I just struck up a conversation with him. For one day, and then the next day, and then a week later, and then...seriously, after three, four months, we became, actually, good friends.” You have to be really careful in the Middle East about talking about Jesus. It's a very slow-work missions there, because you don't know who you're talking to, right? And if the person in this particular location, this person actually went to the police, and my friend and his missionary status would be, he would either be arrested or he'd just be kicked out of the country.

So, once he got to know the guy well enough to realize, okay, so it might be safe to discuss some things with him, he finally said to the guy, “Listen, I just would like to have a cup of coffee in my office, can you come to my office today?” And finally the guy said, “Yes, I would.” So he followed him up into their office, and they came into the doors, it's the office that this mission organization's had for a long, long time, and my friend went off into the other room to get two cups of coffee, and they're going to sit down and just have a chat. On the wall of this missions building, the wall of this office, was this picture of Jesus. Now, you guys might remember the picture of Jesus as the jaundiced, mulletted Jesus, where he's very white, with flowing hair, looks like he's part of ABBA or some other 1970s rock band. And it's on the wall, right, it's been there forever. They've had conversations about how we should take this picture down, because Jesus clearly does not look like that, right? So, this picture's on the wall, and this guy, this bus rider, is standing in front of it with tears coming down his face, shaking. And my friend comes out with the cups of coffee and he's like, “Oh what's going on, are you okay?”



And the guy points at it with his quivering finger and says, “This man visits me in my dreams.” Now listen, you can talk to missionaries in the Middle East, and you can find out very quickly that this is the kind of work that the Spirit of God is doing there. That somehow through the dreams of people, the Lord is laying a foundation for, listen now, the gospel to follow. But here’s what’s crazy. Some people will come to that and say, “See? God doesn’t need a preacher! He is sending the visions to these people.” But the reason we know about the visions is because God sends the preacher. This is what’s interesting about this. That God has chosen that the means by which he is going to save people is not through dreams and angelic visitation, is through the preaching of the Word. Listen, he could have chosen any way to do it. You know that, right?

So, I occasionally like a milkshake. Now I say-I mean occasionally. People look at me and say, “Yeah, a lot.” [Laughter] Like, I occasionally like a milkshake. So I’m sitting there and the milkshake...have you ever noticed milkshakes get a little bit thick, and so you’re like, maybe I should use a spoon for this one? So you think, spoon, straw, I don’t know. And maybe I should tip it back. I usually decide, no, I’m going to use the straw for my milkshake. And I start to suck out of the straw. I could choose many different ways to do it. But I have chosen, because I am the sovereign ruler of that milkshake. I get to choose the means by which that milkshake comes into my mouth. God has chosen that the means...he could have chosen a thousand different ways, guys, for God to proclaim his message. He could have written it in the sky, he could have said, “Listen, my people, I’m going to bring them an angelic visitation, whatever. He chose that the means by which he was going to communicate the message of the gospel, so that people would believe, and then call, was through the preaching of the Word. The sharing of the message by other people. That’s his straw, so to speak.

So what you find, this is the question that people often ask. When you come off a background of Romans 9 which talks about divine election, right. And you’re like, oh, my head hurts because there’s so many questions that are going on, and chief among them is, if God elects those who are his, if he chooses for his own purposes, then why would we ever go and preach? And in Romans 10, on the heels of this, Paul answers that question: because God has chosen the means of preaching to achieve his ends of election. He has a right to choose the ends, and he has a right to choose the means toward those ends. And so you find these really interesting passages in Scripture, like in Acts 18, where Paul’s in the city of Corinth, and things aren’t going well. He just got there, he shared some stuff with the Jewish people. They rejected it, and now he’s gone to the Gentiles. Some of them, some of the Gentiles, have received it, but Paul’s really worried. Should I stick around here? Because I might get beaten again. Should I go to another city? So in the middle of the night, he has a dream. Here’s Acts 18:9-11,

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because [why?] I have many people in this city.’ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.”

Guys, there were no people in the city who were Christians yet. And yet God says, “Listen Paul, I want you to keep preaching the gospel message in this city, because I’ve got a lot of people here.” Isn’t that



magnificent? Here's why it's magnificent. That every time you and I go into a new people group, into a new place, or new cities where we plant churches, in Maple Ridge or wherever, we can be guaranteed that there's going to be success in the mission, because God will make it so. He's got a lot of people there. They're just not here yet.

[Sending]

Calling, believing, hearing through preaching, and then finally, a preacher has to be sent. So finally, Romans 10:15,

“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”

You see his links, right? He's really deliberate about it. He's saying, “Look, the only way for someone to call upon the name of the Lord and thus be saved, is if it all begins with somebody sending that preacher to preach. William Carey is one of the fathers of modern missions, he's one of the most famous missionaries in the history of the world, and when he wanted to go out and he wanted to preach the gospel to the unreached peoples around the world in the 19th century, they came and told him, his church pastors and the elders of his church, when he said, “I want to go and I want to preach the gospel to those unreached people out there,” the pastors of the church and the leaders of the church came and said to him, “Listen, if God wants to save those people, he can do it by himself, thank you.” And Carey was like, “No, but God has chosen this means. Yes, I agree with you, that God has got people in those cities, but God has chosen this means of preaching, and the only way that preachers go is if we send them.” You want a proof text? Romans 10:15:

“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”

So the only way people can call on the Lord for salvation is if we send someone to preach to them the saving message. Now, I want to just show you a few statistics, guys. Because listen, if that's true, what I'm saying then, to bring us all the way back to the beginning, what I'm saying is that Paul here explicitly argues that people will only believe in Jesus, they will only be saved, if they have explicit faith in him. In Christ. And that explicit faith only comes through the preaching of the gospel message by people who were sent. So the church all along has been right about this. So let's talk a little bit about the need then. Okay, so the 10/40 window is language that's used among missiologists these days to describe the region of the world, I should have remembered why the 10 and the 40, but it has to do with the latitudes, but I can't remember if it's 10 degrees north, 40 south...I don't know. Anyways, it's that area there, largely containing the Middle East, India, southeast Asia. In that window, two thirds of the world population dwell. That's 4.4 billion people. Among those 4.4 billion people, 90% of them are unevangelized. That means that most have never heard the gospel even once. 85% of those living in that window are the poorest of the world's poor, and half of the world's least evangelized cities are in that window. To give you an idea of how unevangelized we're talking here, in northern Yemen, which is in the window, there are about eight million people. There's about 4.6 million in British Columbia. So,



close to twice as big. Among those eight million people they estimate, you ready for this? There are 20 to 30 Christians. Some of your small groups are bigger than the number of Christians in northern Yemen. So what do we do about that? Ah, they'll be fine. Really? After reading that text? You think so?

I'll show you what some people are doing about it. Here's some people, I'm going to show you a picture of some guys. These guys are actually-a couple of them I know, I've met. These are pastors in southeast Asia who work with our Changed Life Centre there. It's ministry that we want to partner with in the future to plant churches, these are church planters. They're from churches in another area. They've heard about a people group up in the mountains who don't know the gospel, so they're going to reach them. Sometimes when they get up there, the people aren't very happy and they try to shoot them and hit them. They're at risk of having their lives end on the riverbanks of the world. And they get stuck in the mud all the time with their motorcycles, but they do this, according to the missionaries who work with them, they do this kind of thing with smiles on their faces. I've met some of these guys. Some of them only have three fingers because the last two have been cut off by the Communist government for preaching the gospel. "We'll keep cutting them off," they say, "if you keep preaching." And they keep losing them. And you say, why would you keep doing this? Yeah, because faith comes by hearing. They won't believe unless they're sent.

I've got a friend in India, northern India. Northern India is one of the least-reached places on the planet, they've got 600 million unevangelized people there. 600 million unevangelized people in northern India. He's the director of a Bible college in southern India, and so when he goes on trips into northern India, what he'll do is he'll line up his family, his wife and his four boys, and he will say to them, one by one, "Farewell, farewell, farewell, farewell." Because he doesn't know if he's coming back. He gives them hugs. He does this repeatedly. Every year he goes two or three times, and he gives them massive hugs, because he doesn't know if he's going to come back. What he finds when he goes into northern India, is usually the militant Hindus know he's coming, and they sit in the front row of the place where he's speaking, even if it's been kept quiet. They sit in the front row, and they bring their weaponry with them. He said when I talked to him on one occasion, he said, "I don't know why I'm still alive. I've been shot at, and they have awful aim. People throw rocks at me, they do all sorts of this sort of stuff." And you could say to Isaac, "Why are you doing this, man? That's crazy! Why are you doing this?" Because they have to hear to believe. And they won't believe if they don't send.

Why do you think we want to do a multiplication vision? Why? To put our name in lights? No! Because the mandate is there. Why should I give to it? Come on man! Because they don't know, and they won't know unless they hear. So we have to send. That's what we can do. We can send. Now let me finish with this, David Platt. He's the leader of the Southern Baptist Mission Board these days. A number of years ago there was a big debate that went around about universalism. Rob Bell published a book called *Love Wins* where he argued a kind of universalism. And so in the evangelical world, there just-it erupted into this debate. People were saying, "No, universalism is wrong, look at passages like Romans 10." Platt was in northern India at the time, right, 600 million people unreached. And so he made a video. And in the video, he talked about this. Here's what he said:



“The reality is that if we believe everyone’s going to be OK in the end, if we embrace universalism however it’s cloaked, then we’re free to live our lives however we want. We’re free to sit back as easy-going Christians in comfortable churches because in the end all of these masses are going to be OK. However, if we believe that people around us—the 597 million people in North India and 6000 people groups who have never even heard the Gospel—are going to an eternity without Christ, then we don’t have time to play games with our lives. We don’t have time to play games in the church. We have a mission that demands radical urgency. Here’s the deal [he said]—Intellectual universalism is dangerous, thinking that in the end everyone is going to be OK. But functional universalism is worse, living like in the end everyone is going to be OK. So, let’s fight them both [he says]. In our heads and in our hearts, let’s hold fast to the truth of this Gospel. And in our lives, let’s sacrifice everything we have—our possessions, our plans, our dreams, our safety, our security, and if necessary even our own lives to make this Gospel known among all peoples.”

Will it be worth it? Even if we die, will it be worth it? Well, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. Let me pray for us,

Father, well I’m humbled, Lord, by the mission that is clearly painted in passages like this. And I’m humbled, Father, by our collective responsibility, and sometimes our lack of meeting it, but God, what a joy it is that you shared with us the opportunity to have success here. You have many people in those cities. So grant us boldness and risk-taking endeavor, just to see the gospel go forth in our day, like never before. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.