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**Romans 10:8-15. "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: <sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. <sup>11</sup> As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, <sup>13</sup> for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." <sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup> And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

**How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!**

89 pairs of feet ran out onto the grass in the park in Danube this past week. They jumped. They kicked soccer balls. They walked and ran, even skipped. 89 pairs of feet came and playfully tromped through the grass at Voelz Athletic field. For five consecutive days nearly 90 children learned about the game of soccer, but most importantly they were able to come and hear the good news about their Savior. What a beautiful thing!

It was quite the week. A lot of work went into this camp, a lot of hours planning and preparing, people driving in from all over, people lending their time, a good amount of money was spent on this camp as well, but it was all part of an effort to share the message of Jesus. Sure the kids learned about soccer, the staff had some fun, and it was all in effort to share the message of Jesus, because this message needs to be shared. This message needs to be heard.

That simple statement plays a chief role in Romans chapter 10 as it does in all of Scripture. The message of Christ needs to be heard. The message of the gospel needs to be shared. This is the only way that anyone is saved. Everyone who believes, everyone who has faith and calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved. Such saving faith comes from hearing the message of Christ. Just a few verses after our lesson for today Paul writes, ***Consequently, Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17)***. But before Paul brings the reader to that conclusion, he fires off a series of rhetorical type questions to show there is a necessity for believers to share the gospel. In order for souls to be saved someone has to bring them gospel. ***How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?*** The good news of Jesus needs to be heard. The gospel needs to be shared.

How can children believe if no one tells them? How can their faith be created or strengthened if the saving word does not reach their ears, or if it is not explained to them?

That is why we put in all the planning and preparation. That's why volunteers drove for hours at a time. That is why we held this camp: so that we could share the good news of Jesus with a large group of children and their families.

In our world today there is a lot that is competing for our attention. The life of a young family is a busy one. There are family events, sporting events, multiple work schedules that have to be juggled, so on and so forth. And so within this frenzy of activity it may be easy to downplay the importance of being in church or hearing God's Word. There may be an assumption that we all have a general idea of who God is and what Jesus has done, and that's good enough. Or the mindset might be that the kids will catch on eventually. There will be time for that later. But all too often life doesn't slow down and that essential need is continually ignored and God's Word is not heard.

God's Word needs to be shared because this word is the unique and saving message of Christ Jesus. It tells of the good news of free salvation and eternal life won for us by Christ Jesus our Savior. This word of God, this gospel tells us something that we could never figure out on our own, that Jesus takes away all our sins, makes us right with God, he gives us peace, and he gives us new life and the sure and living hope of eternal life. This gospel of Jesus reminds us of the undeserved love of God that is generous beyond comprehension. His forgiveness covers all our offenses. When we sin, when we daily mess up, when we continuously fail to follow God like we should his forgiveness is there to cleanse us. We can call on the name of the Lord Jesus and he rescues us from sin, he frees us from despair. This is the good news of Jesus that saves us.

This is the good news that needs to be heard because without regular contact with God's saving word our sinful minds improperly adjust the message of salvation because in his gospel God works in a way that is so contrary to our everyday lives. We are not used to things being free with no strings attached. Instead we are used to the concept of getting and earning what we deserve. And so without regular contact with this gospel we change the gospel of free salvation into some sort of work agreement with God. *"Well, if I do this and do that God will be pleased with me. If I try real hard to be good God will be good to me."* That is what we are used to in this life. That is what makes sense to our logical minds. Those having only a general knowledge of God can easily feed into such a rationalization of God, but that kind of thinking can be so incredibly dangerous to our spiritual lives!

Such thinking can lead to a self-righteous piety that leads a person away from Christ. The Israelites were an example of this. Paul writes to the Romans concerning the unbelief of the Israelites earlier in this chapter 10. The good news of free salvation through Jesus was preached to the Jewish nation but instead of clinging to Christ and God's free salvation they were determined to pin their hopes to the law. The problem was that the law had no power to save them, it could only condemn them. For as much as they tried, as much as they fooled themselves into thinking that God would be pleased with their efforts, God clearly says in his word that he demands perfection. Their imperfect obedience could never save them and yet they covered their ears to the gospel and continued down their road of destruction.

There are people today that travel the same road. They too need to hear the message of Jesus. They need to see their need for a Savior for our works could never save us, but only Jesus can. He gladly gave us his perfection and he willingly died for our offenses.

Without hearing the message of Jesus proclaimed truthfully a person with a general idea of who God is may be sent in the other direction. Instead of spiritual piety and self-reliance a person is shoved into despair when he or she realizes that we can never do enough to please God. If salvation would follow logical human thought we would have to make up for our wrongs, and pay off our debt to the divine. But if a person really considers what that means despair or indifference are his or her likely destination. *How could I ever do enough? How could I ever pay off a lifetime of thoughtless words and unkind actions? How could I pay off one day of impure and improper thoughts? And what about those big sins that I have committed, how could there ever be forgiveness for such an offense? If I can't get right with God by being a good person why even bother with God.* Without someone to share the good news of forgiveness in Christ, without the comforting gospel of Christ a boy or girl, a man or woman, may be confined to a life of guilt and prison of despair. Without someone to share the good news a person is lost to the dark confines of spiritual ignorance.

Having a general knowledge of God and trying to figure out the rest by ourselves is entirely different than hearing his word and knowing who God truly is. Saving faith comes from hearing the message of Christ Jesus. Saving faith comes when by God's grace we hear and believe that Jesus died as a sinless substitute to take away all our sins and give us peace with God. This is the good news that we need to hear. This is the good news that tells us of the unique and saving love of God. This is the good news that we as believers work together to share in many different ways.

Imagine being held in captivity. Imagine being a dark prison, chained, unable to move. You have no way out. There is no one to save you. There is no one to comfort you; there is nothing to give you any hope. Death is the only thing coming. This is how we are by nature. We are hopelessly lost and held captive by sin. We are unable to save ourselves; eternal death was our rightful lot. But Christ Jesus in his love and mercy stepped in. He saved us. He freed us from sin and fear. Imagine being in that dark prison and someone finally calls down to you that help is on the way. Imagine being in that hopeless situation and the good news of salvation is shared. How wonderful that news would be! How grateful and thankful you would be for this saving message and for the person that shared it with you.

The good news of Jesus sets us free from the dark captivity of guilt and the chains of despair. Jesus lived a life of perfection to defeat sin and temptation. God's Son died for us to take away our sins. His feet and hands nailed to a cross. His pain, his death was our ransom price. But then our Savior rose from the dead on that glorious Easter morning. His feet would still bear the scars from the nails but now those feet were triumphantly walking out of the tomb in order to assure us of victory and peace that will be ours in heaven. What wonderful news that has become ours because someone brought that message to us!

God has given us that gospel. He brought it to us through the beautiful feet of a pastor or teacher, a mother or father, a spouse or neighbor. He has given us that message, but now

what are we to do with it? We are to cling to it and hold on to it tightly, but not so tightly that we hoard it for ourselves or keep it locked away. God tells us that this gospel is ours to share. He has placed it on our hearts and in our mouths and on our lips. God gives us a desire to share the message so that others may know the joy and peace that we have through Christ Jesus. He gives us the opportunity and the ability to share the good news. How beautiful are your feet when you share that message of salvation through Christ Jesus.

It is because we know this good news of Jesus, this saving message, that we gladly work together as servants of God to share the good news of salvation. There were plenty of other things that the members of these four area congregations could have done this week, but moved by a love for God they rearranged their schedules to come out and help, they gave of their time and abilities and gifts to prepare and serve meals, they worked together not to serve themselves, not to merit some credit or get some recognition, but they came and helped so that children could hear the good news of Jesus. Volunteers from across the state and beyond gathered to share the love of Jesus. Their feet were beautiful as they patiently coached and managed the children. Their feet were beautiful as they spent time with children, many whom they barely knew, and they let the love of Jesus shine through. The feet of these coaches were beautiful as they participated in skits that helped communicate the message Jesus through their words and actions. How beautiful the feet of those who helped share the good news! May the Lord give lasting peace and joy to those who heard this message!

After one of the devotions at the camp I had a young boy approach me with a very straight forward comment followed by an honest question. "I don't get it," he said. "What does soccer have to do with God?" He said. Because of his honesty, I was able to run this boy through the basic points of the day's devotion once more and I referenced the skit that the coaches had preformed to help illustrate the main point of the day. The goalie had stepped in and saved the day when no one else could. He gave his team the victory and they were able to celebrate. The whole team was given the joy of victory. I looked at this boy and I asked him. "Were those players happy? Were they so thankful for the victory they have thanks to their teammate?" He said, "Yes." "So it is with Christ Jesus." I explained to him. "He stepped in. We could not save ourselves but he gave us the victory and because of him we have joy and forgiveness now and we will be able to celebrate with him for all eternity." A smile came over the boys face and I could tell he finally got it. The good news of Jesus was his; in terms that he could understand, in a way that he could remember and take with him, and share with others. What a wonderful moment from this wonderful camp! How beautiful are the feet as he shares that message with others!

A eternity of peace, the thrill of victory, the joy of life eternal free from sin, relieved of the pressure of sin and guilt, and given the prize and reward of heaven, this is the good news we have been given. This is the good news that needs to be shared. How beautiful the feet of Jesus who accomplished our salvation! How beautiful the feet of those who brought us this good news! How beautiful are your feet that can share this good news of victory with others! Amen.