

The Gospel is for EVERYONE

Bible reference for sermon Romans 10:8-13

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), 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 one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. ¹¹ The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

So today we're in what I find a very challenging section of Paul's letter to the Romans. I think it's important to do this especially in these times where some people have strong feelings about the war in the Middle East and modern day Israel. And also in light of some evangelical Christian theories about modern day Israel being the key to the second coming



of our Lord. Let me be clear from the outset, that as Paul addresses his fellow Israelites he does so solely from a spiritual point of view through the lens of the cross and the resurrection, and that's what we'll do today as well. We'll come to find that the message is one that is not just for the people of Israel but it is one for all people... for you and for me.

In these chapters Paul directly addresses his fellow people of Jewish heritage, recognising they are the people of God's promise but some of them have stopped listening and rejected Christ and the gospel, and so they have rejected the promise.

The primary Good news that Paul wants them to hear, and wants you and me to hear, outlined in Romans 9-11 is: **The gospel is for EVERYONE.**

Remember the key verses to unlock the book of Romans are found at the start of Romans 1:16-17: ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is God's saving power for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."***

The gospel is God's power at work for those who believe. It is for everyone. First the Jew, for these are the people of the original promise and now for the Greek and for all gentiles, all nations. In these chapters Paul addresses the issue of the promise falling on deaf ears, even those ears for whom the promise was first and explicitly made.

Romans structure to this point is:

1:1 - 1:17 The Gospel is God's saving power.

1:18 - 3:20 Guilty (like the snake in the garden, we don't have a leg to stand on! Its an oldie but still a goodie 😊).

3:21 - 4:25 Saved by grace through Christ received in faith.

Chapters 5-8 New life and the struggles we still have.

The problem Paul addresses is that Israel have stopped listening to God

In chapters 9-11 the basic problem is this: **Israel stopped listening:**

Paul was Saul the Pharisee. He shares the same Jewish heritage as many to whom he writes. He yearns for all of Israel to hear the gospel for them too and to receive new life just as he has. He

wants the people of promise, Israel, to know that God's grace is for them and for people of all nations who hear and receive the gifts of God in faith.

Israel's blessing as God's chosen ones also became their problem because they stopped listening. They turned from the promise.

Romans 9: *I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵ to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

⁶ *It is not as though the word of God has failed.*

The promise of God in Christ is received in faith, not by birth right. Not because they are more special than others.

God speaks. God did not stop sending his voice. God did not stop speaking his grace. Paul emphasises this

“The word is near you,

in your mouth and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim) (Romans 10:8)

It is the Word of God through which the Holy Spirit forms faith, the gospel, the power of God for salvation. We just cannot underline, underscore or emphasise this enough.

Israel claimed to be the people of the promise by birth, claimed to be the people of the Word but so many stopped listening and rejected Christ.

Gentiles too stopped listening. Tensions existed and flared in Rome. Paul writes to bring calm through basic first principles. God speaks and the Spirit works through his Word, through the gospel, to form faith and life.

It may be very easy for me and you to get smug about our faith and our listening. But how often don't we stop listening to God too (Romans 7)! This week is census week. Since the 1960's the number of people who identify as Christian has pretty much gone from over 90 per cent to less than 50 per cent. As a nation we can become guilty of looking down our noses at people who are more recent arrivals to our shores, at their differences. We might still claim to be a predominantly Christian nation yet so many have stopped listening to God and no longer practice their faith.

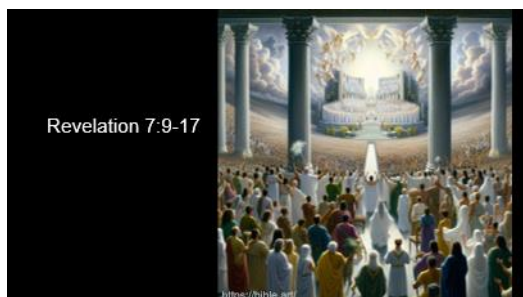
You and I stop listening every time we sin. You and I stop listening to God when it suits us. You and I need the Word of God, the Word of the Law which convicts and the sweet balm of the gospel which saves us.

And this is exactly Paul's point: All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death for all!

But—and this is the beauty of Paul's letter to Jewish and Gentile Christians at Rome—**God sent his Son for them all**. God continues to speak and the Spirit continues to work faith in the hearts and lives of people....people like you and me.

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And it doesn't matter where you're from or what your background is. And for me this exemplifies our mission call to a multi-cultured society about us. This is no monoculture Word for we live in a multi-cultured world and no one is inherently better or has more rights than anyone else.

It doesn't matter what your name is or what your family did or do.

It doesn't matter how much money you have or don't have.

It doesn't rely on you but on God who speaks good news.

For there is NO distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Revelation 7:12-13)

It all comes from God and it is received in hearing the voice of God for us in Christ.

Welcome sign out front! **"Come as you are! God loves you. You are welcome here."**

I wonder whether in our rather affluent country, our modern city, our busy homes, whether our spirituality has become like Israel back in Paul's day? People stop listening to God.



I think we all know someone in our lives who may not know Jesus as their Saviour.

So the words of Paul from the 50's AD written in country Corinth in Greece to the people of the city Rome are also words we are called to hear today and to know that they too are for us...

¹⁴ But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵ And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

God needs your ears and your feet and mouths and lives to share the gospel. Who are those people in your minds and on your hearts?...how will they hear? Who is God sending to them? Who is God sending you to?

Pray now.

Gracious Lord Jesus, when you send me and to whomever you send me, make me ready to be your voice in love and grace. Grant those who hear to come to saving faith in Jesus and to know your Word of sure promise for them. Amen.

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul's Lutheran Church Youtube page <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133>