

## Beautiful Feet

### Romans 10: 13 – 15

- Luke's account of the shepherds beautifully illustrates what Paul is impressing upon us here in Romans 10.

**Luke 2: 8 - 20** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- Let's just simply summarize what happened with the shepherds. A bunch of nobodies, the shepherds, saw somebody who was unlike anybody else, and then they went and told everybody. Do you see that there?
- In the culture of that day, the shepherds were nobodies. Most people found them to be downright disgusting. They lived out in fields, they seldom bathed, they ate and slept with animals.
  - In Christ's day, shepherds stood on the bottom rung of the Palestinian social ladder. They shared the same unenviable status as tax collectors. In the Judaism of that day, there was the Law of God, what we find in Scripture, and what was known as the oral law, the Mishnah.
    - The Mishnah was compiled by the Pharisees. It was religious rules, and in Palestine, at the time of Jesus they were how society operated.
    - The Mishnah reflects the prejudice of that day against people who were shepherds, referring to them in belittling terms. One passage, in the Mishnah, describes them as "incompetent;" another says no one should ever feel obligated to rescue a shepherd who has fallen into a pit.
  - A New Testament scholar named Joachim Jeremias documents the fact that shepherds were deprived of all civil rights. They couldn't even be admitted in court as witnesses. He wrote, "To buy wool, milk or a kid from a shepherd was forbidden on the assumption that it would be stolen property."
    - In Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, Jeremias notes: "The rabbis ask with amazement how, in view of the despicable nature of shepherds, one can explain why God was called 'my shepherd' in Psalm 23:1."

- Like tax collectors and prostitutes, shepherds were officially labeled “sinners”—a technical term for a class of despised people.
- They weren’t the kind of people you’d invite to a party, and you especially wouldn’t invite them into a birthing room.
- Yet, Luke’s account tells us that God chose the shepherds to be the first recipients of the good news of great joy that would be for all of the people, and God also chose them to be the first preachers of the good news of great joy to the surrounding community.

**1 Corinthians 1: 27 – 29** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

- Think how often we think we are ill-equipped or too insignificant to share with others the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus, as if somehow everything revolves around us and our charisma and our abilities. Paul’s words and what happened with the shepherds completely destroys those excuses, don’t they?
- After the angels make the announcement to the shepherds, who were nobodies, they went and beheld baby in the manger who was the greatest somebody to ever be born. Look how the angel describes the baby in the manger.

**Luke 2: 11** a Savior, who is Christ the Lord

- Those terms that the angels used to describe the baby in the manger are filled with meaning. He is the greatest somebody ever to be born.
  - The title Christ means Messiah. This baby was the king that everybody was longing for. A king who would save his people, a king who came to the world as a human baby but was also God. That is what the angelic description of the baby as Lord means.
- So, these nobodies, the shepherds, saw somebody, as Savior who is Christ the Lord, and what did they do?

**Luke 2: 17 – 18** And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

- They went and told everybody. What a perfect illustration that is for us of what Paul is teaching us here in Romans 10:

**Romans 10: 13 – 15** For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

<sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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!”

- In each of these verses, notice that each phrase builds upon the previous phrase.

**1. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (verse 13)**



The good news of the Gospel is for all men everywhere. What do we mean by that? Think of the parable of the sower, and the four types of soil in Matthew 13? It begins like this:

**Matthew 13: 13** A sower went out to sow.

- Then Jesus goes on to tell us that the sower was rather indiscriminate where he sowed. Some seed fell on the hardened path, other fell on rocky soil, still other fell on weed infested soil, and the rest fell on good soil. The seed went everywhere, but only some of the seed fell on good soil where it could take root, thrive, and bear fruit.
- Why was the farmer so indiscriminate in sowing? Because that is how they did it back then. We have modern methods that puts the seed in perfect rows in just the right place. But back then, they scattered the seed by hand—the wind would get it and it would go everywhere, falling on all types of soil.
- But only the good soil allowed the seed to thrive and bear fruit. Why didn't the rest of the soil do that? Because it wasn't properly prepared. That parable that Jesus told perfectly illustrates how the doctrine of God's election ties in perfectly with whosoever will.
  - The seed in the parable is the Gospel, which Paul calls:

**Romans 1: 16** the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

- But, for the Gospel to take root and bear fruit in a person's life the heart must be prepared, and God is the only one who can do the prep work.

**Deuteronomy 30:6** And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

**Ezekiel 36:26** Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

- But we don't know whose heart God is working in, so like the sower we go and spread the good news of the Gospel everywhere to all men, in anticipation that God will graciously work in the hearts of his elect, so that some will call upon the Lord and be saved.
  - We are not the power. The power is contained in the seed—the gospel. We don't prepare the heart. God does. So, what do we do? We go and spread the seed indiscriminately everywhere. Commissioned by Jesus to go and make disciples, we are now the sower.
  - That's all we are responsible to do—scattered the seed of the Gospel everywhere we go. Like the shepherds, we are to go out into the world, armed with the good news of great joy and give all people everywhere an opportunity to meet Jesus, our savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- What does it mean to be saved? It means to be delivered from sin to righteousness, from God's wrath to God's blessing, from being lost, to being adopted into the family of God. And how does that happen?

**Romans 10: 9** 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.

- This is the goal of sowing the seed. This is the goal of sharing our faith. It is so that some will hear and believe and receive Christ as Lord.
  - Think what happened with the shepherds after they heard the angelic message of good news and great joy. They went and saw and believed, and then they went to all men and made known what they had seen.

**Luke 2: 17** they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child

- You only commend to others what you cherish in your own heart. If we lack evangelistic zeal, then it means that we lack zeal for the king, so the first thing we have to do is to take Jesus into our own lives.
- Who did they make it known to? From the way Luke wrote this, they were so blown away by what they heard and saw that night, that they went and told everyone that they came in contact with about this good news of great joy.
  - They didn't simply go back to their fields, back to the sheep and sit around a campfire and talk about how wonderful it was. These nobodies, these country bumpkins went throughout the city with the good news of great joy. The same good news of great joy that is ours today.
  - By God's appointment, these lowly, very ordinary shepherds were the means by which everyone else heard the news of Jesus' birth.
- Don't miss the ordinariness of how the word of God comes to most people. The shepherds got an angel but everyone else, in the town, got a shepherd.
  - Luke's gospel tells us that the shepherds beheld the glory of the angels, then they beheld the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, and then they went and proclaimed to everyone what they beheld.
    - Now think about us.

**2 Peter 1: 16 – 17** For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,"

- The disciples were eyewitnesses to the majesty of Jesus. They saw, heard, and touched Jesus.

**1 John 1: 1-2** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life

- The people who wrote the Bible were eyewitnesses, but the rest of us just get the book that they wrote, and someone whom God appoints and is willing to go and make the book known to others. This is the ordinary means that God has chosen to make the glory of His salvation known to all men everywhere.

## 2. But how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? (verse 14)

- In order to call upon the Lord people must believe. Believe what?

**1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 4** The gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

- This is what Paul has told us that we must believe in our hearts in Romans 10: 9-10—the belief that Jesus died for our sins, but then by the power of God, rose again on the third day. This belief in the truth about Jesus in our hearts is what makes us Christians.
- Again, looking at Luke’s account of the shepherds we can see what real belief looks like. Look at the difference between the multitudes that encountered the shepherds, and Mary after she encountered the shepherds.

**Luke 2: 18 – 19** all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

- The crowd wondered, or marveled, in amazement at what the shepherds said, but Mary treasured up and pondered it all in her heart. What does that mean? The crowd is amazed for a while at the news they have heard, but Mary is taking it all in and meditating on what it means. This is what true belief looks like.
  - Again, think back to the parable of the sower. The crowd that momentarily wonders in amazement is like the rocky soil where the seed springs up but quickly dies because there is no root. Or like the weed infested soil, where the seed springs up but is soon choked out by the worries of life.
  - But Mary’s heart and the shepherd’s hearts are like the good soil in which the seed takes root and bears fruit. Look how the shepherds’ hearts were transformed by the Christmas message.

**Luke 2: 20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- What about you and your heart? How are you processing the message of Christmas? Are you treasuring up and pondering on what it means for you that:

**Galatians 4: 4 – 5** that when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

- When we ponder these things, and treasure up what all this means for us, how can we not, like the shepherds, live our lives professing that the baby in the manger is the savior, Christ, the Lord.
- Each of us are the ordinary means that God has chosen to make the grace and glory of His Son known to a world that is walking in darkness. If we don’t tell them, how will they ever come to believe?



### 3. **And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? (verse 14)**

- For people to come to know Jesus, and to have saving faith in him, requires information. That is why the church is commanded to go to every corner of the world and make that message plain to all people. Isn't that exactly what the shepherds do. After they beheld,

**Luke 2: 17** they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

- In order to believe the message, people must first have an opportunity to hear the message.
  - People involved in missions often speak about unreached people groups, that is, people who have little-to-no access to the gospel or any missionary presence. It is estimated that there are over 1 billion people who fall into that category. How will they believe of whom they have never heard?
    - This is why we support Santos and Norma in Peru and Fiaz in Pakistan.
  - I doubt missiologists would consider people in Sturgis to be an unreached people group, and yet think how much Biblical illiteracy there is, in our own community. Unlike 50 years ago, a whole generation is growing up that knows nothing of God, nothing of the good news of great joy. How will they believe unless they hear?
    - This is one reason why our Kid's Quest ministry, vacation Bible school, and youth group ministry are so important. Through them, children in our community have the opportunity to hear and believe. As you give of your time, talents, and treasure, you are making it possible for children in our community, children in Pakistan, children in Peru, and yes, adults too, to hear and believe this good news of great joy.

### 4. **And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (verse 14)**

- Now, I know what you are thinking. Preaching is the pastor's job, and it is, but I can't do this alone. Each of you have contacts throughout our community that I will never have. For the most part, people won't stumble in the door of the church by themselves. They need you to preach—to be a herald. To tell them, "Look, I have found the good news of great joy, and you can have it too."
- The word translated "preaching" is kerysso, which means to be a "herald" or to make announcements. A herald was, in a sense, a living newspaper; heralds were a major means of transmitting news by making announcements in the marketplace and city streets.
  - So, the word "preach" does not refer only to what today are called "sermons." Herald's operated in the streets. The shepherds were heralds. They weren't preaching a three-point sermon with a poem at the end. They were simply telling everyone what they had experienced in their own life—giving others an opportunity to experience the same thing.
  - All the shepherds did was bear witness to how they had been filled with great fear, but now all fear was gone. Why? Because of the good news of great joy that now allowed them to fear not.

**Luke 2: 10 – 11** “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

- This was the good news that the shepherds were heralding throughout the city. This is the good news that Paul is talking about us heralding throughout our city.

**Romans 10: 15** “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

- That quote comes from Isaiah 52: 7. Listen to it in its entirety.

**Isaiah 52: 7** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

- This is the good news of great joy that we are called to herald throughout our community. Peace, happiness, salvation have come because our God reigns. Because the baby in the manger who is the savior, Christ the Lord has come to defeat Satan, sin, and death.
  - Knowing this baby as the savior who died on the cross, knowing this baby as Lord of your life, the king who defeats your enemies and rules over your life, dispels all fear, and brings peace and happiness. Why would we not want the world around us to have and experience what we have?
- The message proclaimed in Isaiah 52: 7 is the exact same message the angels heralded to the shepherds and then the shepherds heralded to the city. It is the same message that we herald to the community around us.
  - Who publishes peace:

**Luke 2: 14** on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

- Who publishes salvation:

**Luke 2: 11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior

- Who brings good news of happiness, “Your God reigns.”

**Luke 2: 11** who is Christ the Lord.

- Fear is gone, peace has come, because the savior who is Christ the Lord has broken into our world. A savior king who has defeated evil, Satan and death.
- As simple as they were, as despised and looked down upon as they were, the shepherds heralded that message through the city, because it was only by hearing that people could come to believe.

### **5. And how are they to preach unless they are sent?**

- God sent the angels to the shepherds to herald the good news of great joy, and the angels sent the shepherds to see for themselves this one who was the object of the good news of great joy. But who sent the shepherds into the city to spread the good news of great joy?
  - Based on Luke’s text, I don’t think in the strictest sense of the word that we can say anyone sent them. They were just so filled with joy and awe over what they had seen and heard that out of the overflow of their heart their mouths spoke. But the reason the angelic announcement came to the shepherds was so that they would go and make known these things.

- “And how can they preach unless they are sent?” (v 15). Someone must do the communicating, must be the herald. The Greek word rendered “sent” is apostello.

- Paul probably has two aspects in mind when he writes “sent.” First, that Christ has sent us authoritative witnesses and teachers, the apostles, whose message is in the Bible.

- Second, “sent” likely also refers to the way Christ through his church sends out missionaries, preachers, and ordinary Christians in all places and all times to be messengers of that apostolic word. God has sent us with the message of salvation. He may send us overseas, into the pulpit, or across the street to our neighbor. But ours are the beautiful feet, bringing good news

**6. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”**

- It was God who elected me to salvation and called me to himself through the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was a camp counselor named, Skip, with beautiful feet, whom God enlisted to bring the good news of great joy to me in the summer of 1963. I’ve never seen him since, but God used him to explain the good news of great joy to me in a simple way that even a 7-year-old could understand.

- He had me read John 3: 16 and substitute my name in wherever his finger pointed. So instead of reading:

**John 3: 16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- I read

**John 3: 16** For God so loved Jeff, that He gave His only Son, so that Jeff through belief in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- And then I prayed and asked Jesus to be my savior.

- The shepherds got an angel who brought them to Jesus. I got a Skip, but it was his beautiful feet that brought Jesus to my life, by preaching the Gospel to me, in a way I could understand and believe, and call upon the Lord and be saved.

- How beautiful are the feet that bring the message that our God, who was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger, who as our savior, would go to the cross to be crucified for our sin, has been raised from the dead, defeating Satan, sin, and death, and now reigns forever as Lord of lords and King of Kings.
  - That is the message of Christmas. Because the Son of God has come to our world, “Our God reigns.” “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” “For the people living in the land of despair hope has come.”
  - Jesus has come to bring hope to your life. Jesus has come to bring light to your life. Jesus has come to redeem you and bring you into the family of God. That is the good news of great joy that the world around us needs to hear.

**Romans 10: 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? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”