

Epiphany 5 – Romans 10:13-17

Sermon

ILCW - C

February 10, 2019

13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **14** 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? **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!” **16** But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” **17** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Dear Christians who love Christ,

I received an email that was originally sent out by the Barna Group. This is a company that researches trends in faith and culture. Part of the email says:

Sharing one's faith—evangelizing—is a core practice among many religions. For Christians, it's viewed as a mandate from Jesus himself before he departed earth: commanding his disciples to "spread the good news." Yet, today, a number of factors are curbing many Christians' enthusiasm for faith-sharing, including the decline of religion in America, a spreading apathy toward spiritual matters and a growing cultural suspicion of people of faith.

It is against this backdrop that Barna is releasing “Reviving Evangelism”, a new report based on research commissioned by Alpha USA. This study looks at the faith-sharing experiences and expectations of Christians and non-Christians alike. Among the major findings in this report is the revelation that Christian Millennials feel especially conflicted about evangelism—and, in fact, almost half believe it is wrong to share their faith. From: Barna Group barnagroup@barna.org Date: Tue, Feb 5, 2019 at 9:26 AM

Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 23 to 38 in 2019) is considered a Millennial, and anyone born from 1997 onward is part of a new generation. (from Pew Research Co.)

It is my feeling that Millennials are not the only ones who have reservations about sharing their faith. The Barna Group looks at trends and not absolutes. People in other generations could feel the same, but maybe not as many.

The word of God from Romans today is going to urge us to share our faith. This is not Pastor Sprain or Pastor Spevacek pushing witnessing. This is God the Holy Spirit through St. Paul telling us that it is necessary that Christians share the message of Christ. It is the only way people can hear about the Savior and God's gift of salvation. In fact the prophet Isaiah tells us that beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. You ask, **Beautiful Feet? Yes, if You Are a Christ Preacher.**

1. Salvation for all through the preaching of the Christian message.

I remember standing at the door of a home in Kingswood Park. I clearly remember the wife and mother who lived their telling me, *"I need to learn more about the Bible."* She did bring her children to VBS in the very early days of our church. However, when I would occasionally stop by, she would tell me her family was too busy to study to the Bible. Finally one day she told me, *"We need to come to church, but my husband owns his own business and we have a number of things going on in our lives, we just don't have time for church right now."* I was sad. I have not seen her to this day. She was right she needed the Bible and the word of God. St. Paul emphasizes that salvation is for all people and comes through the preaching of the message about Christ.

A. When we come to Romans 10:13 we are jumping into the middle of an explanation that St. Paul is giving. He quotes the prophet Joel, **for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."** [Joel 2:32]

What is he talking about and why is he quoting Joel?

1. St. Paul in Romans talks about God's gift of salvation. The Jews as a nation had rejected Christ as Messiah. So the message of salvation was proclaimed to the Gentiles or non-Jews. Some of the Christian Jews in Rome would have relatives back in Jerusalem. Paul anticipates the question, *"What about them? Has God rejected them? Is there no hope of salvation?"* St. Paul responds in chapter 9 and reminds that God did not reject them, the Jews had rejected Christ and the message of salvation. He also states in chapter 10 that he has been earnestly praying that some of his fellow Jews might be saved. Then he quotes Joel, **"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."** They can be saved.

2. It is very likely that the Christians in Rome had heard about the miraculous catch of fish, which we hear this morning from Luke 5. Jesus is revealed in that miracle as the mighty Son of God. They had also heard about Good

Friday. How does the Son of God get nailed to a Roman cross? St. Paul tells us, **“God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”** (3:25) Jesus died so that through the shedding of his blood, we might be atoned or “at one” with God. He took away our sins and made us right with God. So everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved. St. Paul has another question in mind. B. How is a person converted? How does salvation come to the individual? Paul points to this answer with a series of questions. **“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?”** (Romans 10:14) People call on Jesus because they believe in him. They believe because they hear about him. They hear because someone preaches or shares the name of Jesus. C. People are extremely offended today when they hear that Jesus is the only way to be saved and to go to heaven. If we remain silent this is wrong. We should repent. The inspired word of God tells us this. In Acts 4:12 St. Peter says, **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”** The Lord God speaks through Isaiah, the prophet, **“I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.”** (43:11) Jesus says in John 14:6 **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** We have forgiveness for our sins in Jesus. Jesus is the only source of forgiveness and salvation for other people. People may be offended when we confess Christ. We are simply confessing what the Bible says. We might be tempted to think, “I just won’t bring up the subject.” The Lord has different plans for us.

2. Sinful human beings have the privilege of serving as messengers.

Rather than being reluctant we should be excited. The Lord has given us sinful human beings the privilege of serving as his messengers.

A. There is a fourth question that Paul asks, but it is in verse 15a, **“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?”** If someone is to preach the word of God, they have to be sent. The Lord is sending you and me.

1. What this means. When Jesus sent his disciples, he didn’t just name the twelve. He gave his command to the church. We are sent. Not everyone is sent to a distant land. We are sent to the people that live right around us. Wherever there is an opportunity, there Jesus is sending us. Perhaps as we

get older there are less opportunities. We can still write emails and letters. We can call people.

We can also support those who go in our place. We will be having a Mission Festival Sunday at the end of February. We do this raise awareness of world missions. When we hear about what is going on, we can pray and support efforts in far off lands. One way you can show your support, is to help make the Russian dishes that we will be sampling and eating that Sunday.

2. Spreading the message is a beautiful thing as, Isaiah tells us through St. Paul, **“As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”** [Isaiah 52:7] (15b) Feet in ancient times weren't usually beautiful. They walked on dusty roads that sometimes were strewn with garbage. Feet looked and smelled ugly. Those feet are beautiful to the people who are on the receiving end of the message of salvation. God has come to us and he has brought us peace, joy and salvation! That is good news!

B. St. Paul wants us to understand that there will be rejection. In verse 16 he writes, **“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.”** He quotes Isaiah, **“For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”** [Isaiah 53:1] The people did not believe Isaiah's words about Christ. Jesus himself was rejected by most of the people. This is true today. Most people don't want to talk about Jesus. They don't believe that they need him.

C. Never-the-less, Paul summarizes, **“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”** The only way people can be saved is to hear about Jesus and believe in him as their Savior.

So many churches today will promote anything, ie: environmental causes, but they will not speak about Jesus. Even churches like ours are tempted to either tone down that message of sin and grace or believe *“we will get around to talking about Jesus later, when we get people in the church.”*

Do you understand that if you really hide what you are about, that the church is being dishonest? Secondly, do you understand that the work of the church is to save souls for time and eternity? The only way to do that is to show them soul is lost without Jesus. We proclaim the powerful message of God's love in Jesus. It is the only way. It was God has commanded us to do. Conclusion: I agree with the Barna Group's results in that we live in a society that intimidates Christians. *“How arrogant you Christians are to say that*

your beliefs are more important than any religious beliefs I have.” Behind that statement lies an assumption that all religion comes from people’s minds. Therefore, one person’s thoughts are no better than some else’s thoughts. That would be correct if we were simply sharing human thoughts.

What believing Christians confess is based on the word of God. The word that God shared in the days of the Old Testament and in the days of New Testament is that our efforts or knowledge are not enough to save us from the damnation of sin. God sent his Son into the world to save us. He won forgiveness and salvation for all people through his death on the cross.

One of the main reasons we are still on earth is to live and confess our faith in Jesus, the Savior. Since God has commanded that we help proclaim the message, this is what we do without apology. It may take some patience and a lot of listening. We can shine the light on false thinking. We can tell them of God’s genuine love for them. When we do, people will think our feet are beautiful because we brought them Christ. Amen.