

Series: “NSAC Missions Month” **Week 2, January 15, 2017 Pastor Dave Sattler**

Text: Romans 10:1-15, “How Will They Know?” Sources: NIV Life Application Bible; Commentaries: Bruce, Luther, & Moo; Books: Burnham & Seamands; Articles: Besonen, NTM Weekly & missionfrontier.org (Woods); Studies: Baylis, Lucado, & Nielson; Song: Fleetwood Mac.

Review & Introduction:

- **<Slide>** Good morning, everyone! I’m Dave Sattler, one of the pastors here at NSAC.
- January 2017 is “Missions Month.” With focus on our core value: Missional Living.
- Q: “We will go into our neighbourhoods and **around the world** to express the **love & hope of Jesus**.”
- **<Slide>** ILL - The year was 1943. And the first team of New Tribes Missionaries ...
 - Sought to share the Gospel with the Ayore people of Bolivia. Little was known about the Ayores; and what was known would not put your mind at ease.
 - “You won’t come back alive,” the missionaries were warned.
 - But this did not deter them. Others asked, “Why go and risk your lives?”
 - Their answer, simple, Q: “It is because the glorious name of Jesus is not known there, and must be made known at any cost. We don’t care so much about whether the expedition is a failure so far as our lives are concerned, but we want God to get the most possible glory from everything that happens.”
 - 5 missionaries went out. 5 died at the hands of the Ayore people. But God received the glory. On the foundation of martyrdom for the cause of Christ, the Ayore church was born. - NTM Weekly, 1/8/17.
- **<Slide>** ILL - “Bring Back The King!” In the 1880’s this vision ...
 - Launched a missionary movement that changed the world.
 - It was our founder, Dr. A.B. Simpson’s strong conviction that Matthew 24:14 should be taken at face value: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”
 - Christ coming back was contingent on the Gospel being spread to the ends of the earth.
 - [Not sure I support his interpretation, but I love his missions-passion.]
 - Simpson’s followers acted upon the conviction of these words: By 1893, the Christian & Missionary Alliance movement emerged. By the end of its first 6 years of operation, 180 missionaries worked on 40 stations in 12 countries.
 - And 23 colleagues had given their lives for the cause of Christ.
- The absolute necessity and the sacrificial cost of missions.
- **<Slide>** I invite you to turn in your Bibles or electronic device to Romans 10:1-15, p. 918 in the blue Bibles. Only Jesus deserves the worship of the nations.
- Scriptures tell us there will come a day when people from “every tribe, tongue, & nation” will worship Jesus for eternity (Revelation 5:9).
- So, **how will they know?** Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” We, the Church, have now been entrusted with the job of “making disciples” (Matthew 28:19) — to reach out to people in all parts of the globe with the life-changing message of the Gospel.
- NSAC has a history of supporting tribal missions — planting indigenous churches around the world. Reaching unreached people groups — those who’ve never heard about Jesus, live in places where there is no church, and don’t have the Bible in their own language — is NSAC’s highest missions priority. And this is no small task.

- <READ> Pray: “Lord, move me out of the way. Speak to us by your Spirit.”

Passage Outline:

- This passage is difficult to grasp.
- 1. <Slide> **God’s Righteousness — Why We Need It & How We Get It (10:1-8)**
 - Paul’s heart for his fellow Israelites is clear: “that they may be saved.” (v1) Their religious zeal was evident, but their zeal was not based on heart-knowledge of the truth. And misguided passion is a dangerous thing. Sways us from the truth. I easily lose sight of reality when I’m fired up about something. In the tunnel. Unaware.
 - What the Israelites were missing most was knowledge of the “righteousness of God” declared in His Son, Jesus Christ. (v3) And that’s a big miss.
 - Relying on a righteousness of “their own.” Apart from God.
 - Some of the most arrogant, spiritually-blind people grow up going to church, trying to say and do all the right things. But miss Jesus completely!
 - APP - Still we mustn’t be quick to judge 1st Century Israelites. For this is all of our sin.
 - Thinking, Q: ‘I’m good enough. On my own. Don’t need no help.’
 - One of the first phrases I ever learned was, Q: ‘I can do it myself!’
 - Q: “You can go your own way!” Fleetwood Mac sings.
 - When truth is I can’t. But I keep trying!
 - In every culture in human history the attempt to earn God’s favour our way always consumes us. Yes, God is accepting and full of grace. But, God is also holy and all-powerful and cannot be approached lightly. Or on terms we set.
 - Many world religions teach that, by performing good works, or by our good outweighing our bad, or by being better than at least one other person, we can “ascend” to God. (v6)
 - But this is not the Christian Story.
 - It’s quite the opposite: Christianity says we can never ascend to God on our own merit. No, instead God descended to us in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - And Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves. V4: “Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”
 - Because of my sin I don’t have a good-enough righteousness of my own to live in right relationship with a perfect holy God. I can’t do it. I need help.
 - And, that’s where Jesus comes in. Jesus lived a perfect sinless human life.
 - Then, as our only worthy sacrifice, Jesus died on a cross to pay the punishment for our sin. And Jesus rose again conquering sin and death. Now through faith in Jesus, we can receive the gift of His righteousness.
 - <Slide> ILL - Let’s imagine my righteousness is an overcoat.
 - And I work hard to cover its stains, stitch it up, make it look nice.
 - But it still comes out dirty every time — exposed for what it really is.
 - No matter how hard I try, it will never be good enough to protect me from the elements. Because it’s not made of the right lasting material.
 - I need a new overcoat. And the only one that will suffice is Jesus and His righteousness. Clothe “yourselves with Christ,” Paul says (Galatians 3:27).
 - All pursuits towards God apart from Jesus are impossible.
 - Not by works, it’s an alien righteousness we receive through faith in Jesus.

- And God declares sinful people like you and me just in His sight.
- Jesus' precious gift. This is the 'game-changer.'

2. <Slide> The Nature of Salvation — Faith in Christ Alone (10:9-13)

- Paul's call to faith includes both an outward commitment — “confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’” (v9) and, an inward trust — “believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.” (v10)
- APP - Christian faith is incredibly simple, yet at the same time, profound.
 - I love how one commentator puts it,
 - Q: “Salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart.” - NIV Life App, p.2046
 - Still I know people who claim deep faith, yet rarely express it out loud (they're afraid to talk about it, publicly declare Jesus as Saviour, or have never been water-baptized). Others talk freely, but it's not sunk from their head to their heart. Genuine faith involves both — outward and inward commitment.
- However, what's most important is not our faith, but the Object of it.
- Perhaps you noticed how Paul 'flavours' the text with tons of OT language. Why?
- Because he wants Jews & Gentiles alike to see Jesus, not as some new God or religion, but as part of a larger story: everything in the Scriptures, the whole picture of God's people — Israel, even all of history, points to Christ.
- Someone challenged the Trinity with me recently saying the NT doesn't confirm and the early church never believed Jesus was God. Well, here it's pretty clear. In v9 & 12, Paul identifies Jesus as “Lord” — Yahweh, the OT name for God.
- 1st Century Christ-followers believed the same.
- Christianity claims only one way to God — **through faith in Jesus.**
- At the same time, we see here the God of the Christian Story is not exclusive.
- Romans 10:13: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [**Jesus**] will be saved.”
- I'd be missing it if I didn't give opportunity to respond now to God's call.
- Perhaps you're in church today and you've never put your faith in Jesus for salvation.
- You know you're a sinner. And you've been relying on your own ways of approaching God — trying to be good, earn His favour. This morning God's been showing you your need for Jesus — that white overcoat, His righteousness as your only way to salvation and restoration of that broken relationship between sinful you and holy God.
- I encourage you to respond in faith: confess with your mouth, ‘Yes, Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead.
- It's the most important decision you could ever make. Let's pray together now.
- You can simply pray this prayer along with me quietly in your own heart to God:
 - “Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I confess today that ‘Jesus is Lord’ — His life, His death, His resurrection are my only hope for salvation. I believe in Jesus and invite Him into my life today. Amen.”
- If you prayed that prayer, way to go!
- And, please tell someone — the person who brought you, someone sitting in your row, or come talk to me or one of the pastors. We'd love to help with you some next steps.
- Signing up for our Alpha Group or our next Baptism Class would be a great start!

3. <Slide> The Need and Call for Missions (10:14-15)

- Paul presents his case for missions using a series of rhetorical questions.
- V14-15: “How 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? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?”
- Belief in Jesus is dependent on hearing about Him. Hearing means someone has to preach the message of Jesus. Preaching only happens if people are sent out. Got it?!
- Paul brilliantly traces salvation back to the church’s mission: **sending people out**.
- ILL - In other words, people only come to faith in Jesus if someone tells them about Him.
 - Skeptics in the crowd may wish to challenge.
 - Yes, God can reveal Himself through other means: nature, dreams, visions.
 - You hear about people becoming Christians this way.
 - But 99+% of the time, people come to faith in Jesus through other people.
 - My story reflects this reality. It took my Sunday School teachers at Zion Tabernacle Church at 26th & Sophia in Vancouver, my parents, & my grannie to “preach” the message of Jesus to me.
 - And I responded in faith. As a 5-year-old: September 16, 1974!
 - Who first told you? How did you hear about Jesus?
- <Slide> To GO and offer the message of Jesus to all nations and people groups is the Church’s great and yet unfinished task. Yet, in many ways, the Christian Church in the West has lost its missions fervour. Why? Many factors.
- Culture. In Canada we believe in religious freedom, just as long as you don’t push your beliefs on anyone else. That would be considered ‘intolerant’ — offensive.
- Added to this is the notion tribal missions is ‘inhumane’ — about bending indigenous people and their ‘heathen’ ideas to the foreign, narrow-minded, oppressive Christian worldview. [Tragically some Christian missionaries have tried this.]
- But this is not the method or the point in reaching unreached people groups.
- The goal is not to destroy but to let God speak through language and culture, to allow tribal people to worship God in their own unique way.
- God’s truth transcends culture.
- Our unity as believers comes not in being made to look the same or talk the same but through our shared faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.
- We in the West have so much choice — perhaps too much. Choice of food, choice of home, choice of job, choice of religious beliefs, choice of ways to cope with pain, fear, & hopelessness. But imagine life with choice.
- What if tribal missions is about spreading this God-given ability to choose? Giving people in far-away places opportunity to choose the way of Jesus as an alternative to the fear-based lives they’ve often only known before? Or, about shining God’s Light into areas of deep darkness where Satan has had free reign for centuries?
- I believe there’s a theological factor at play too.
- Do Christians still take the Bible as God’s authority in our lives?
- Do we believe Jesus is the only way to salvation and that people who have never heard about Jesus are truly lost without Him? So many people have never heard the message of Jesus. How could a loving God possibly leave them out?

- I know this is not the message you want to hear. And you could justify it away as Paul (he's a bit biased) or Sattler (he's the missions guy), but look for yourself. I know I too struggle with the question of fairness. What's the truth? What's God really saying?
- Here's what I think He's saying, 'All people need to hear about Jesus. And my church, I am calling you to GO and share the message.'
- And, therefore the sending out of missionaries must take high priority in the life of the church. We mustn't turn inward and spend all our resources on ourselves, this building, to the neglect of people outside these 4 walls — both near and far.
- ILL - A cool story is emerging these days in Mainland China's House-Church Movement.
 - **<Slide>** It has its roots 2 centuries back.
 - In 1865, after 6 years as a missionary to China, Hudson Taylor's vision was to take the Gospel beyond the coastal cities, into China's heartland.
 - Taylor's "China Inland Mission" was radical for the colonial period: it was interdenominational, Chinese dress was worn by missionaries, and final decisions were made on the ground in China, not back in the office in England.
 - By 1895 CIM, had 641 missionaries serving in nearly all provinces.
 - Soon after, due to political turmoil, the Christian Church in China was forced underground and many missionaries evacuated or were imprisoned.
 - Of course we know that for the next 100 years the Christianity in China grew through the House-Church Movement.
 - Today this vibrant church has a vision to send out 100,000 Chinese missionaries to some of the remaining unreached peoples of our world — particularly in Muslim, Hindu, & Buddhist strongholds.
 - One of their leaders says, Q: "... we are so thankful for the impact Hudson Taylor made on our country. His example was one of single minded passion to see God's kingdom come. Like a mighty soldier he marched into pioneer areas where the name of Jesus Christ had never been uttered. Today the house churches in China have caught the same vision. It is as though Hudson Taylor handed a flaming torch to the Chinese church and asked us to continue the race towards the finish line." - Peter Xu Yonge in Seamands, p.138
- Witnessing firsthand the transforming power of the new life Christ provides (Doug) fuels my passion to be a "sent one" myself in this culture and, as pastor, to steward the ongoing call of God for NSAC to be a sending church.

Conclusion:

Do you have "Beautiful Feet"?!

- There's this wonderful idea in the text: preachers with beautiful feet — heralds who convey a life-changing message sent by someone who has commissioned them to deliver it. This is the joyful sending work of the church.
- V15 quotes Cf. Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation."
- People of NSAC, like I said last week, we are looking for the next generation of missionaries. And it starts right here at home.
- APP - While it could be argued that most Vancouver-ites have easy access ...
 - To the gospel, many are oblivious or still without a clear understanding of it.

- o I continue to meet people in their 40's, 50's, 60's who've grown up here and know little or nothing of the story of Jesus. Or have adopted a certain bias against Christianity through what they've learned through the media.
- o A few years ago, one of my kids came home from school and said, Q: "Dad, it seems like it's okay to be anything else but Christian."
- o It's my opinion the West Coast of Canada is now not just post-Christian, but anti-Christian. There's work to be done — in our homes, in our neighbourhoods, in our campuses, at our workplaces.
- o It's imperative we both embody and deliver the true message of Jesus in our city. With renewed calling and passion. Be missionaries in our own culture.
- You know that, along with our MOT & Staff, I've been praying recently that some of our young people would consider a career in tribal missions. That some of our career people would be willing to move far away. Commit the best years of their lives to God's cause of reaching the unreached.
- We want to confidently send people — some trained as missionaries to plant churches, others as professionals (teachers, scientists, athletes, bloggers) to go into limited-access countries and simply do their jobs and share Jesus through personal relationships.
- Reality is missions to limited-access countries to unreached people groups (particularly in the Islamic, Buddhist, & Hindu world) is tough slugging. Success is slow. Requires many resources. Demands patience. Is dependent on an outbreak of the Holy Spirit.
- **<Slide>** ILL - One nation on the radar of our denomination is the Yazidi people.
 - o A Kurdish minority group numbering half a million, who've inhabited the mountains of northwestern Iraq & Syria for centuries.
 - o They follow an old religion similar to Zoroastrianism, with a little of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, & Islam mixed in.
 - o The Yazidi have been hated because of their beliefs and faced genocide more than 70 times. Persecution is a core component of their identity.
 - o Recently Alliance International Workers assisted in the completion of the full Bible translated into their language.
 - o Let's pray the Yazidi will read it now and find Jesus!
- **<Slide>** Maybe you're a Christ-follower or a long-time church-goer, but you've never really gotten involved in missions. Perhaps God is calling you today to GO.
- BQ: Will you pray, will you give, would you even be willing to GO in 2017?!!!
- If you feel God tugging at your heart, calling you, please, come and talk to me. It's a wild ride God's mission. And simply the best thing to give your life to on the planet. Amen.