

# OUR TASKS: PROCLAIMING AND SENDING

*SERIES: MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM: WHY ARE WE HERE?*

**Danny Hall**

---

I've been thinking a lot about the war, as we all have. As I was preparing for this message I ran across a reference to warfare that is germane to the Scripture text we are going to be looking at: for every person on the front lines in the battle, at least nine people are required to support him behind the lines. We've been seeing on the news of the war that our troops are doing a fair amount of waiting, because their supply lines are being attacked. The people at the front can't proceed unless their supplies can be renewed. And a little farther back from the supply line, even all the way back here to our own soil, there are people involved in supporting our troops.

You and I are involved in a very important spiritual war. We are called by God as his people to be out sharing the good news of Christ with people who need to be forgiven and need to have their lives transformed. While in the process of doing that we keep pushing back the boundaries of the kingdom of darkness and expanding the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The nature of spiritual warfare means that there are times when all of us will be in front-line positions, but in order for us to be successful, within the body of Christ there has to be a network that supports us and facilitates our proclamation.

The text that we are going to look at, Romans 10:14-15, talks about those different aspects of proclaiming the gospel to the whole world. There are two parts of this task: active involvement and support. At different times and places we find ourselves living out each of those roles.

No one likes to preach or teach on chapters 9-11 of Romans because it seems a little obscure and somewhat parenthetical. So let me back up for a moment and talk about the context of this passage, because we are going to jump right into the middle of Paul's argument.

In the book of Romans Paul is writing his treatise on the salvation of Christ. He is writing this to commend himself or explain himself, because he wants to go to Rome and share the gospel, and he wants to eventually make Rome a base for extending the kingdom of God deeper into what we now call Europe. So he systematically lays out his understanding of salvation and his description of who the people of God are. He is building the argument that what marks out the people of God is that they are a people whose faith is in a Savior, Jesus Christ.

He begins by explaining that everyone falls short of God's glory, and he builds a rather strong case for that by reminding us of the downward cycle of sinfulness in societies and in individual lives. Then he goes on to address the case of those who rely on keeping a good moral code. His own national brethren, the Jews, have been the holders of God's Law, and therefore have a sense of morality around that, in addition to their sense of ethnic privilege as the people of God. But Paul shows how the word of God that the Jews are holding onto as a badge of superiority to everyone else actually exposes them as being equal violators of the Law, equally sinful. So, all of humanity is lost, caught up in selfish sinfulness. What is to be done?

Then in 3:21ff Paul begins to unveil the wonderful picture of Christ our Savior, sent by God to be the provision for the deepest need of the human heart, the need for forgiveness. His sacrificial death is what provides the way of access to communion and fellowship with the living God, because he removes that barrier of sinfulness. Then on through the end of chapter 8, Paul discusses the wonderful outworking of that—how God seeks to bring not only forgiveness to us in Christ, but a whole new life as we are transformed more and more into the image of his Son by the working of the Spirit in us. And God's covenant promise to us as his people is that he will never leave us or forsake us. He is going to finish the work that he began in us.

Throughout this whole argument, from time to time Paul sets up rhetorical questions, plays the devil's advocate, and then answers those questions. Now, Paul has established that the true people of God don't get there by ethnic privilege or national pride or any sense of self-morality, but a sense of total humility and reliance on God's loving grace. But what about all the promises God made to Abraham about the founding of that great nation to come from Abraham's seed, all the Old Testament prophecies, and the covenants God made with his people? I believe Romans

9-11 are Paul's attempt to delve into that subject very deeply. He shows the difference between national Israel and the Israel of faith, and how God's promises work out to both groups in what is basically a defense of God's faithfulness to his people. Paul's whole argument is grounded in the idea that God is faithful and trustworthy. And in the end he will be true to all his covenant promises to all people everywhere.

Paul has begun to talk about how passionate he is for all people, especially his own countrymen, to come to the wonderful realization that salvation is by faith in Christ. In fact, in the beginning of chapter 9 he says that he would wish himself to be *anathema*, meaning damned, if it would lead to his fellow countrymen coming to faith in Christ.

In chapter 10 Paul begins by reminding his readers that no righteousness attained by human effort, self-justification, or special spiritual knowledge or experience is sufficient to build us up into good people. It always falls short. There is no place for trying to reach up to God through all this kind of self-effort. Paul then speaks a wonderful word in 10:8-13.

## The pathway to righteousness

“But what does it [Scripture] say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek [any non-Jew]; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

There is no way to establish our own righteousness, but the good news is that there is a righteousness of God, as we saw back in chapter 3 (Discovery Paper 4852), that comes through faith in Jesus Christ, because he became the righteous sacrifice for our sin. Faith in him leads us to a place of blessing in God, of forgiveness of sin, of personal relationship with him. What Paul lays out for us in these verses is a pathway to this righteousness of God, and he speaks of two parts: (1) confessing Jesus as Lord and *believing* in one's heart that God has raised him from the dead, and (2) *calling* upon the name of the Lord. Anyone who trusts in Christ and casts himself or herself upon God's grace in Christ can indeed find salvation.

Paul goes on to identify a step that precedes this process of believing and calling upon the name of the Lord, so that altogether it's a three-step process. *Calling* upon the name of the Lord requires that you *believe* in him, and *believing* in him requires that you *hear* about him. You hear the message of your need of salvation and the wonderful reality of who Christ is. You come to the point where you believe that message. And then you personally call upon the Lord in whom you have now believed to be your Savior, to offer you forgiveness.

That progression is very clear and logical in verse 14 of our text:

**How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?**

There are a couple of problems with the word “preacher” in this verse. First, it's not a very accurate translation. A better translation is “herald” or “proclaimer.” The original word has the idea of someone like a town crier, a public herald of an important message. Second, the idea of a preacher is much too limited in our culture. Normally we assign that word to someone who stands up in front of a congregation on Sunday morning and delivers a sermon. In fact, when I was in a little church I pastored years ago in Mississippi that was what they all called me. “Hey, Preacher!” It used to drive me crazy. I did everything I could to get them to either call me by my first name, or if they wanted to use a title, call me Pastor, but it was just too ingrained in the culture, so I was Preacher.

But Paul understands that part of what it means to be a follower of Christ is to be one who is a proclaimer of that message to those who need to hear it. He goes on in verse 15:

**How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of**

## **those who bring good news of good things!”**

So if the message of Christ’s forgiveness and grace is to get out, there are two important roles for the body of Christ: proclaiming and sending. Let’s just unpack those two words and look at them for a few moments.

### **Proclaiming Jesus Christ**

What does it mean to be a proclaimer? The most important thing about the proclaimer is not what methodology he or she uses but the content of the message. In verse 17 Paul says, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” There is a specific proclamation that must be made, and the content of it is Jesus Christ. Throughout Paul’s preaching and teaching this is his central theme. There are many things that are required of us if we are to be true Christ-followers who live out God’s life in us in this world—love, compassion, justice, mercy. But this message is central, and we cannot push it to the side no matter how noble our efforts are in other areas.

Now, while Christ himself is the content of the message, and that is the single most important thing about it, there are various methods of proclamation that we see throughout the New Testament. Sometimes the followers of Christ were out in the street preaching. Sometimes there were one-on-one conversations in which they proclaimed the name of Christ. And remember when Paul was in Athens (Acts 17:15-32), he went up to the public arena where the philosophers debated religion and philosophy and simply entered into the debate. He availed himself of the opportunity in that culture where people were interested in talking about that kind of truth, to proclaim Christ. So there are many different methods.

Since I was asked to take a look at the issue of evangelism and missions in our church, one of the things we’ve been talking about is what we need to do to help all of us to be better proclaimers. Ideas such as having a class about sharing our faith or a class about apologetics have come up. People have suggested training in certain methods of evangelism. I don’t want to disparage any method of evangelism, but part of the problem you run into when you teach a method is that it is easy to then limit evangelism to following that method. And as helpful as a method can sometimes be, one of the things you see in the New Testament is a huge emphasis on the content of the proclamation, and hardly any emphasis on the nature or methodology of that proclamation. These people as a way of life, in the arenas that were open to them within a given culture, proclaimed Christ. And we can all do that. We can all focus on learning more about him, walking in closer fellowship with him, deepening our understanding of the wonderful love and grace of God, and then just faithfully pointing people to Christ. This is what it means to be a proclaimer.

The other important role Paul outlines for the body of Christ is sending. “How will they preach [proclaim] unless they are sent?” How do we get ourselves out there as proclaimers of the truth of Christ’s love? I see at least three different ways people were sent out in the New Testament church.

### **How proclaimers are sent out**

The first way is that God directly pushed people out into the arena of ministry. A good example of this is found in Acts 11:19-26, where Luke, the writer of Acts, points out that after Steven’s martyrdom and the whole controversy in the city of Jerusalem over this growing group of believers, a great persecution arose. Because of that persecution, the believers were scattered, and wherever they went they proclaimed Jesus.

Sometimes God shakes up our world in ways that we don’t even understand. We could be in one of those situations now. God in his sovereignty is able to use the folly of human beings all the time to reorder the world and push the church out into places that it needs to be but may have been reluctant to be. We have no idea what the world is going to be like in another year or two. Whatever evil or good goes on, God may use it to reorder us out of our comfort and reliance on certain things that are distractions from loving him completely and loving the world.

The world of missions has changed radically in the last decade or two. For almost two hundred years the so-called modern missionary movement was fueled by resources and money and personnel from Western Europe, particularly

Great Britain, and the United States. But that has totally changed. Now there are more missionaries coming out of South America, Africa, and certain Asian countries. God is doing things now that we as Western missionaries have been unable to do.

Sometimes we Americans think we know how to do things better than everybody else. When I lived in Europe I discovered that many people there have a love/hate relationship with Americans. They are amazed at how we do things, and there's a certain allure to American things, but there's also a certain distancing from the American hubris, a perception that we think we know everything. For a long time I think we've had that attitude in the church and in missions. If an idea didn't come from us, then it must be an inferior idea. God in his sovereignty just sort of flipped that on its head and began sending his people out from all over the world. It didn't matter where they came from. They didn't have to be American, or white. And now we can see that that makes perfect sense.

God is sovereign over this, and he can directly push people out. Sometimes he uses things like persecution, and sometimes he uses the circumstances of life. When we were living and ministering in Mississippi, there was a young couple, about our age, who came into our fellowship. We met them at a time when they were really struggling in their marriage, spiritually, and otherwise. We got really close to them over the years we spent there. Joel, the husband, had a carpet business, and he was building a huge, beautiful log house on some family land not too far from where we were. As God began to work in him and he began to get his life back on keel, his passion for the Lord began to grow and he began to feel that some of his life goals weren't all that important. He began to feel a sense of calling to be involved in ministry and to not be caught up in selfish pursuits. He once said to me, "I keep feeling this call of God, that there's got to be more in life than pursuing these personal things. But there are two things that are holding me back: I've got this business that I don't know what to do with, and I'm building this house. I've invested everything I am in this business and this house, and I don't know what to do about that." We began to pray about that, and in the space of about a month, two incredible things happened. First of all, in that small town in Mississippi, the idea that someone would come and buy out your carpet business was unthinkable, yet someone walked up and offered to buy his business. And second, in an act of vandalism some kids set fire to some big bales of cotton, and the fire spread and actually burned his house down. It was a hard blow to see his house burn down, but he said, "You know what? I had this incredible sense of liberation." Joel actually went back to graduate school, and then went on to finish seminary. He has been pastor of a church in that same area of Mississippi ever since.

I'm not suggesting that God is going to burn your house down, but God can thrust us out there in all kinds of ways, because he wants us to go for it. He wants us to be his ambassadors, his proclaimers.

But there are other ways that people were sent out in the New Testament. The church was involved in sending. In Acts 13 the church leadership at Antioch came together, praying and fasting and seeking the Lord's will. In the midst of that the Holy Spirit spoke to them and said, "Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas." The Lord directed the church to send out these two to be its emissaries, its proclaimers, in new parts of the world. In this same way, God has used our church to raise up people. We need to continue to pray and ask God, "Who among us are you raising up to send out into some area of special service? And how are you sending all of us out into the world in which we live?" As the body of Christ, we need to be men and women who are fasting and praying and seeking the Lord's heart, so that the church is a place of sending. The church in Antioch was where Paul and Barnabas and others matured in their ministry. Paul, particularly, was encouraged there and developed there. The church is a place of preparation and training, and as God helps us to grow and walk in faith, the Holy Spirit then leads us to go out.

The third way that people were sent out in the New Testament was that the Holy Spirit led certain individuals to go. After Paul and Barnabas came back to Antioch from their first missionary journey, Acts 15:36 says it seemed good to them to go out and do this again. Within the context of the nurturing of their church, they were led by the Holy Spirit. They just felt as if God were calling them to go, so they went.

So if we are going to be a church that is serious about proclaiming the gospel and we want to help send people out, what do we need to do? Let me suggest some areas for us to think about.

## **Getting ready for proclaiming and sending**

First, we need to be preparing and equipping people. Earlier in this series I used the phrase “discipleship with a purpose” (Discovery Paper 4853). That is something we always need to keep before us. While we are totally and completely committed to growing up together in Christ, learning his word, learning how to live out that word, discipling one another, and encouraging one another, that equipping and discipling process is never an end in itself. It’s to prepare us to be the people of God. So part of being a sending church and a proclaiming church is to prepare and equip each other for that service.

Second, we need to be a praying church. The church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out because they had been in a period of prayer and fasting. I wonder how many times we have taken seriously enough the fact that God wants us to be proclaimers and senders that we actually spent time praying, fasting, and seeking the heart of God about it, wrestling with the hard question of how God wants us to fulfill this commission.

Third, we need to be an encouraging church. We have to be able to talk about our own experiences out in the world, because one of the things the church is noted for is shooting its wounded. We tend to be highly critical of the struggles that people have. Yet when people are out there trying to live faithfully and honestly and authentically, trying to love others for Christ, they are going to get wounded in the battle. They need encouragement. And as we send people even farther from here into the mission field, we have to see ourselves as encouragers for them.

When Ginger and I first went overseas to Vienna, we got off the plane on January 13, 1984, and found out that the two couples we knew in Vienna were at war with each other. It took a long time for that to heal. So our first days in Vienna were spent in the middle of that. There were moments when we would say, “What in the world are we doing here?” We felt alone and discouraged. The words of encouragement, letters, prayers, and calls from people back home were extremely helpful to us in that dark time.

Fourth, we need to be a rejoicing church. In Acts 14:26-27 when Paul and Barnabas came back from their first missionary journey, they shared all that they had done. One of the things that we need to learn how to do better at our church is celebrate the good things that God is doing, share with one another the stories of how God is working in our lives and in ministry both here and around the world.

And finally, we need to be a giving church. There is some evidence of giving that helped Paul along the way, particularly the words of thanks that Paul writes, for instance in Philippians 4. There is very little in the way of a giving guide in the New Testament, but it certainly is true that if we are going to be a sending church we have to be willing to sacrifice in order to support the proclamation of the gospel through this church both here and abroad.

Our dual roles are to be proclaimers and to be senders. In conclusion let me share three implications. First, we should be asking for the Spirit of God to lead us in how we are to engage in those activities, individually and as the body of Christ.

Second, we should get to know each other and know what is going on in each other’s lives so that we can pray for one another and encourage each other. That includes knowing who our missionaries are so we can be praying for them and encouraging them.

Third, we should seek the Lord’s leadership in giving. I know these are hard economic times, but God asks us to live sacrificially because we are in a battle that is worth winning: the battle for the lives of people who need God’s forgiveness, who need to see love and justice and mercy demonstrated in life, who need to hear that there is a better way than simply living for themselves. We should demonstrate the love of the gospel, and in order to make that happen we have to make sacrifices on all levels including our giving. We should be willing to supply moral support to our missionaries and others we know are out there by writing letters and sending appropriate gifts and encouraging them in whatever ways we can.

Proclaiming and sending are huge tasks. The great thing is that God has given us these tasks as the body of Christ, not as individuals. And it is God’s call to us to say, “Lord, we are willing to do this. Show us how.” Under God’s leadership we will see him use our church to proclaim the good news of Christ both here and abroad.

---

Scripture quotations are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE (“NASB”). © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Catalog No. 4855  
Romans 10:14-15  
5th Message  
Danny Hall  
March 30, 2003

[Back to Index page](#)

Copyright © 2003 [Discovery Publishing](#), a ministry of [Peninsula Bible Church](#). This data file is the sole property of Discovery Publishing, a ministry of Peninsula Bible Church. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain the above copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the prior written permission of Discovery Publishing. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to: Discovery Publishing, 3505 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto, CA. 94306-3695.