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The Beautiful Chain

Romans 10.14-17

Series: The Pure Gospel

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The Village Church

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I. Introduction

A. We return to our series called The Pure Gospel – our study in the book of Romans

1. And we find ourselves well into Chapter 10

B. In our last message we examined Romans 10.5-13

1. **Romans 10:10–13** (ESV) —

a. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

b. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

c. 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

d. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

C. This morning we continue Paul’s description of what is required for one to be saved

D. Text

1. **Romans 10:14–17** (ESV) —

a. 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

b. And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

c. And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

d. 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

e. As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

f. 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

g. 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

E. Pray

F. Back in the 1990's the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association held a conference in Amsterdam for Itinerant Evangelists

1. Many came from all over the world

2. One man’s story in particular captured the imagination of the conference, and especially of Billy Graham himself

G. **Joseph – Masai warrior**

1. Michael Card wrote about the story; here is his account

2. “One day Joseph, who was walking along one of these hot, dirty African roads, met someone who shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. Then and there he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The power of the Spirit began transforming his life; he was filled with such excitement and joy that the first thing he wanted to do was return to his own village and share that same Good News with the members of his local tribe.
3. “Joseph began going from door-to-door, telling everyone he met about the Cross of Jesus and the salvation it offered, expecting to see their faces light up the way his had. To his amazement the villagers not only didn’t care, they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.
4. “Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a waterhole, and there, after days of passing in and out of consciousness, found the strength to get up. He wondered about the hostile reception he had received from people he had known all his life. He decided he must have left something out or told the story of Jesus incorrectly. After rehearsing the message he had first heard, he decided to go back and share his faith once more.
5. “Joseph limped into the circle of huts and began to proclaim Jesus. ‘He died for you, so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God’ he pleaded. Again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him, reopening wounds that had just begun to heal. Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die.
6. “To have survived the first beating was truly remarkable. To live through the second was a miracle. Again, days later, Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scarred – and determined to go back.
7. “He returned to the small village and this time, they attacked him before he had a chance to open his mouth. As they flogged him for the third and probably the last time, he again spoke to them of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Before he passed out, the last thing he saw was the the women who were beating him began to weep.
8. “This time he awoke in his own bed. The ones who had so severely beaten him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health. The entire village had come to Christ.”

H. J. Oswald Sanders, one of the great missionary statesmen of the 20th Century, told a similar story

1. He told the story of an indigenous evangelist in India who walked barefoot from village to village preaching the gospel of Christ
2. After a long day in which he traversed many miles, he found the message falling on deaf ears
3. He went into a particular village and tried again to speak the gospel to them
 - a. He was rejected, spurned, thrown out of the village

4. He went to the edge of the village, lay down under a tree, and fell asleep from exhaustion
5. He awoke, and to his surprise, the whole village had come out
 - a. They gathered to hear him
6. The village chief explained that they had come out to see him out of curiosity while he was sleeping
 - a. When they saw his blistered feet they concluded that he must be a holy man, and that they had been evil to reject him
7. So they gathered to hear again the message that this preacher who was willing to endure such suffering, would share with them
- I. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

II. The Righteousness of Faith

- A. In the book of Romans Paul has been systematic and relentless in laying out what is necessary to be saved
 1. The book of Romans is about the Gospel of Christ – from beginning to end
 2. The Gospel of Christ – that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself
 3. That in spite of the sinful condition of all humanity – all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
 - a. God has provided a way in which His own righteousness would be provided to all those who believe in and trust in Jesus
 - b. That is, trust not in their own righteousness, for we have none of our own
 - c. But trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ
- B. That gospel was summarized wonderfully in our last message when Paul says:
 1. **Romans 10:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord
 - b. and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - c. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- C. And then he declares:
 1. **Romans 10:13** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- D. That is what Paul calls the “righteousness based on faith” as opposed to the “righteousness based on the law”
 1. Righteousness based on the law is when we presume to be able to present to the altogether righteous and holy God our righteousness that comes from our obeying the law of God
 - a. Such a preposterous presumption is what Paul has exposed earlier in this epistle, especially in Chapters 1-3
 2. But the righteousness of faith is when we believe in, have faith in, trust in the righteousness of another
 - a. The righteousness of Jesus Christ

- b. Who alone can stand in the presence of God in His own righteousness
 - 3. And in the gospel, Paul declares that when we believe in Jesus and trust in His righteousness, God imputes that righteousness into our account
 - a. And looks at us as He does His Son Jesus Christ
 - E. And that is good news indeed!
 - F. And now, in our text today, Paul extends the implications of that gospel
 - 1. Showing the responsibility of the sinner to make such a decision of trust in Christ
 - 2. And also showing the responsibility of the Church to make sure that as many as will listen to this good news has the opportunity to do so

III. **The Golden Chain**

- A. Now, before we unpack our text this morning, please allow me a bit of a digression
 - 1. Because, you see, our text this morning is a chain
 - a. A sequence of activity which is both logically and practically relentless in laying out the necessity of evangelism and mission
 - 2. It is a chain which is foundational for our commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission – one of our core values
 - a. And indeed, one of the central elements of the purpose statement element in our TVC mission
- B. But it is not the first chain we've encountered in Romans
 - 1. Now, as one who has made a lifetime of studying the Bible, I have grown to love chains
 - a. But no one, I believe, loves chains more than the apostle Paul
- C. The first chain we encountered was a wonderful chain back in Romans 8
 - 1. A chain which was a critical feature of the assurance that all believers in Jesus should embrace
 - 2. It was called **The Golden Chain**
- D. **Romans 8:28–30** (ESV) —
 - 1. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
 - 2. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
 - 3. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called,
 - 4. and those whom he called he also justified,
 - 5. and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- E. This is called The Golden Chain because it lays out God's sovereign role in the salvation of all those who will ever believe in Christ
 - 1. It is a chain that starts from before the creation itself
 - a. And unfolds relentlessly until the consummation of the salvation of the elect

2. **Foreknowledge** – God loved His own even before the foundation of the world
 3. **Predestination** – God determined to conform his own into the image and likeness of His Son
 4. **Calling** – those who God predestined He called
 - a. Not the general call of the gospel
 - b. But the spiritual call in which the Spirit of God breathes spiritual life into spiritual corpses
 5. **Justification** – those whom God calls, He also justifies
 - a. He declares righteousness all those who, having been born again, believe in Christ
 6. **Glorification** – those whom God justifies, He also sanctifies
 - a. And sanctification ends in the eternal state with glorification
 - b. In which the believer is freed from, not only sin's penalty and power, but also from sin's presence
- F. It is a **Golden Chain** indeed
1. But some might say, "Wait a minute – that chain is all about God"
 - a. And indeed it is
 2. It is God who foreknew
 3. It is God who predestined
 4. It is God who calls
 5. It is God who justifies
 6. It is God who glorifies
- G. God is the subject of every sentence is that Golden Chain
1. So the Golden Chain is the God-centered view of our salvation
 2. So that each one of us may fall on our faces and worship God alone
 - a. So there is no boasting
 - b. No pride
 - c. Only humility
 3. Knowing that from beginning to end, salvation is of God
- H. But what about us?
1. Don't we have some responsibility?
 - a. Don't we have some role to play in salvation?
 2. Well, of course we do!
 - a. And I'm not surprised that not very far away from the Golden Chain in Romans 8 Paul gives us another chain in Romans 10
 3. And this chain has to do with the human responsibility in salvation
- I. It is just as relentless as the Golden Chain
1. Just as incontrovertible
 2. But it lays out the human side of salvation
- J. And while the chain in Romans 8 is called The Golden Chain
1. I would call the chain in Romans 10 The Beautiful Chain

IV. **The Beautiful Chain**

- A. So now, let's look at this beautiful chain

1. Remember, our last text ended with this:
 - a. **Romans 10:13** (ESV) — 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
2. **Romans 10:14–17** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
 - b. And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
 - c. And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
 - d. 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
 - e. As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”
 - f. 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”
 - g. 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
3. The first thing we should notice is how it compares with the Golden Chain
 - a. The Golden Chain moves forward in time
 - b. From eternity past – foreknowledge and predestination
 - c. Through the present – calling, justification
 - d. To eternity future – glorification
4. But the beautiful chains moves in the opposite direction
 - a. From the end to the beginning
 - b. And the end (the starting point for this chain) is when a sinner calls on the Lord to be saved
 - c. Then the chain moves back in time
5. You can’t call on the Lord unless you first believe
 - a. You can’t believe in the Lord unless you hear about Him
 - b. You can’t hear about Him unless someone tells you about Him – someone must preach
 - c. And no one can preach unless they are sent
6. From a human perspective, salvation is just as relentless and incontrovertible as the Golden Chain
 - a. But it moves from the end of the sinner calling on the Lord
 - b. Back to the beginning of sending the preacher

B. **Calling**

1. So, let’s unpack each one for a bit
2. **Romans 10:14** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 **How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?...**
3. Now this makes an interesting distinction, but is one that ought to recognize and take seriously
 - a. It’s the distinction between calling and believing
4. Paul says, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”
 - a. And then he says, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?”

5. The implication is that you might, in fact, believe, in a certain sense, in the Lord Jesus Christ
6. Maybe you've gone to church all your life
 - a. You've recited the Apostles Creed or the other creeds and affirmed the basic truths of the Christian faith
 - b. And if someone pressed you, and made you to declare what you truly believe, you would say, "Yes, I do think Jesus was the incarnate Son of God"
7. Fine! That's great!
 - a. But if that's all, that just puts you in company with Satan!
8. **James 2:19** (ESV) —
 - a. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well.
 - b. Even the demons believe—and shudder!
9. But have you ever actually called on Him?
 - a. Have you ever truly surrendered to the Lord?
 - b. Have you cast yourself on His mercy?
 - c. Have you opened yourself up to the Lordship of Christ and told Christ, "You can have me!"
 - d. "Take me! Save me!"
10. Dear friends, you must call on Him; you must ask Him to save you
 - a. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!"
 - b. Have you called on Him?
11. You can't just go through the motions of church every week
 - a. You must make a decision!
 - b. You must cast yourself with Christ
12. Now this calling is not the same as the calling in the Golden Chain
 - a. That's the calling of God by the Spirit of God
 - b. It is essentially what happens when one is spiritually born again
 - c. That's what God does
13. But this calling is what you must do!
 - a. Your salvation is not passive
 - b. Yes, God is sovereign over salvation
 - c. He does it!
 - d. But He doesn't do it without you
14. Do you want this Jesus?
 - a. Then call on Him!
15. You are senior citizens – there isn't much time left
 - a. You're coming down the homestretch of life
 - b. You don't know what tomorrow will bring
 - c. Why wait?
 - d. Let today be the day of salvation!
 - e. Call on Him!

C. **Believing**

1. Now, having said that, you can't call on Him unless you believe in Him
2. **Romans 10:14** (ESV) —

- a. 14 **How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?**
3. So, working backwards, you can't call on this Jesus unless you believe in Him
 - a. Unless you believe in who Jesus says He is
 - b. Unless you believe who the Bible says He is
 - c. Unless you believe that He is the incarnate Son of God
 - d. Who alone is righteousness
 - e. Who is the God-man, sent by the Father to do for us what we could never do for ourselves
 - f. Who lived the righteous life we could never live
 - g. Who suffered and died on the cross, and took upon Himself the just penalty of sin for all those who would ever believe
 - h. Who rose from the dead on the third day
 - i. Who ascended to the right hand of God, where He reigns and rules today
 - j. And who will come again just as He promised
4. Do you believe these things about Jesus?
5. That's why we teach
 - a. That's why we have Bible studies
 - b. That's why we preach Jesus from this pulpit
 - c. That's why we do Study with the Pastor
 - d. So that we know who this Jesus is
 - e. So we can believe in Him
6. Because you can't call on Him and be saved unless you believe in Him
 - a. Do you believe in Him?

D. **Hearing**

1. **Romans 10:14 (ESV) — 14 ... And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?**
2. Moving back up the chain, you can't call on Him unless you believe in Him
 - a. And you can't believe in Him unless you hear about Him
3. We preach, we teach, we study, we read
 - a. So that you, so that your friends and neighbors, will hear about Him
4. Because you can't call on Him unless you believe in Him
 - a. And you can believe in Him unless you hear about Him

E. **Preaching**

1. **Romans 10:14 (ESV) —**
 - a. 14 **... And how are they to hear without someone preaching?**
2. That's right, somebody's got to preach
 - a. And that's not just me – or the many other fine preachers who filled this pulpit in the last month
 - b. That's anyone who has prepared enough to be able to tell others about who this Jesus really is!
3. Now, the world usually thinks it knows better than the church regarding how to communicate the gospel

- a. There is no end to the creative ways the world has to communicate the gospel
 - b. And there is often some value in some of those things
 - c. Technology can play a part
 - d. Social media can play a part
 - e. Hey, maybe somebody has actually believed because somebody through a John 3.16 sign up in a football stadium and it got picked up by a camera
- 4. But those are not the primary means by which people come to faith
 - a. The Bible says the primary way people come to faith is through preaching!
- 5. **1 Corinthians 1:21** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, **it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.**
 - b. KJV – the foolishness of preaching
- 6. That's right – to the world, preaching is foolishness
- 7. I stand up here week after week and make noises
 - a. I hope they are the right noises
 - b. I hope they accurately tell the story of Jesus
 - c. But to most people out there, it's all a fool's errand
- 8. **1 Corinthians 1:21–25** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God **through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.**
 - b. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,
 - c. 23 but we preach Christ crucified, **a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,**
 - d. 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
 - e. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
- 9. Yes, preaching is foolishness to many people
 - a. But preaching is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe
 - b. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men
- 10. So, you can't call on Christ unless you believe in Him
 - a. And you can't believe in Him unless you hear about Him
 - b. And you can't hear about Him unless somebody preaches to you
- F. **Sending**
 - 1. And finally, preachers don't show up out of nowhere
 - a. Somebody has to send them!
 - 2. **Romans 10:15** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
 - 3. There's a lot to the sending

- a. Preachers need preparation
 - b. They spend time studying – in seminary or Bible college
 - c. They need to be called to preach just as we need to be called by God to be saved
 - d. They need to be vetted, examined, approved by solid evangelical ecclesiastical bodies
 - e. And they need to be supported, funded
 - f. Encouraged, prayed for
- 4. TVC is a sending church
 - a. We support the Great Commission fund – which supports international workers in more than 80 countries
 - b. We support our national church ministries, and seek to supply pastors in churches and church plants all over the U.S.
 - c. We have our own international workers with whom we partner
 - d. We currently have two members of our church who serve internationally
- 5. Because, you can't call on Him unless you believe in Him
 - a. And you can't believe in Him unless you hear about Him
 - b. And you can't hear about Him unless someone preaches
 - c. And you can't have preachers unless they are sent
- 6. The chain is relentless and incontrovertible
 - a. There is no bypassing this chain
- G. So, what makes this chain beautiful?

V. Beautiful Feet

- A. Romans 10:15 (ESV) —
 - 1. 15 ... As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"
- B. Beautiful feet!
 - 1. Really? Seriously?
- C. When we think of beauty in the physical body, we tend not to think of feet
 - 1. We think of a lot of other physical characteristics
 - a. And spend a lot more time working on those characteristics
 - b. Than we do one's feet
- D. And sometimes, feet are downright disgusting looking
 - 1. The original illustration of the itinerant preacher in India was identified by his abused, blistered feet which traversed many miles communicating a message of good news about Jesus
 - 2. But his feet were recognized because they were abused
 - a. But they were beautiful feet
- E. Our own missionary – our dear Janice Quinlan
 - 1. Many of you are aware that when she returned to the field in Thailand this last term she had serious problems with her feet – one in particular
 - a. She had an infection that threatened to result in amputation
 - b. And was required to have IV antibiotics for an extended period

2. Now I'm not going to show you any pictures of Janice's infected foot
 - a. But it was really ugly, disgusting
3. I doubt she would appreciate my sharing it
 - a. (Although she wasn't particularly shy about posting pictures on Facebook at the time!)
4. But trust me, you don't want to see that foot just before you go to lunch
- F. But you know what?
 1. Janice has beautiful feet
- G. What is it that makes beautiful feet?
 1. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"
 2. What makes feet beautiful is the message that those feet bring
 3. I don't care what those feet look like – if they bring the good news about Christ, they are beautiful feet
- H. Paul here quotes from two OT passages
 1. **Isaiah 52:7** (ESV) —
 - a. 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."
 2. **Nahum 1:15** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!
- I. The origin for this strange assessment of feet have to do with the ancient practice of armies going out to war
 1. The armies would go out to battle
 - a. And those left behind would anxiously await news about whether the outcome was good or bad
 2. The watchman would stand on the city wall and scan the horizon in the distance to see when the messenger would return
 3. And off in the distance, the messenger would appear over the hill
 - a. And the watchman could tell from miles away whether the news was good or bad
 - b. Whether there was victory or defeat
 4. And the only way the watchman could know is by watching the feet of the runner
 5. If they runner was struggling, faltering in his gate, then that was an indication that the battle was lost
 - a. The "loser's limp" as it were
 6. But if the runner was energetic and pumping his legs powerfully, maybe even generating dust in his trail
 - a. The watchman would say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news"
 7. The news is good news
 - a. Good news of victory
 - b. Good news that "Your God reigns"

8. It's no accident that one of the great manufacturers of running shoes is named after the Greek Goddess of victory
 - a. That's right – Nike!
9. When the watchmen identified the victorious runner bringing good news, the runner probably wasn't wearing Nikes
 - a. But you could still tell victory by the feet of the runner in the distance
 - b. And it still meant victory
 - c. And it was still good news

VI. Conclusion

- A. As wonderful as that image is, the text continues
 1. Continues with a shot of realism
- B. **Romans 10:16** (ESV) —
 1. 16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"**
- C. Beautiful feet preach the good news!
 1. Bringing good news of great joy!
 2. But not everyone is thrilled
 - a. Not everyone believes
 3. And that's the world we live in
- D. But the response of the people to our message has nothing to do with whether our feet are beautiful
 1. Even if no one believes – we can have beautiful feet
 - a. If we proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ
- E. And then verse 17 summarizes the essence of this beautiful chain
- F. **Romans 10:17** (ESV) —
 1. 17 **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**
- G. Now, I'm the preacher this morning, and I can't resist one final observation from this text
 1. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ
 2. Not, through the word of the preacher, but through the word of Christ
- H. Now, yes, it is the word of the preacher – we've already seen that
 1. But when the preacher preaches the good news, the one who believes does not hear the preacher
 - a. He or she hears Christ
 - b. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ
 2. For me, the preacher, there is no more encouraging text than that
 - a. Because when I preach, it's not Andy's word that matters
 - b. It's Christ
 - c. It's His word
- I. And that's beautiful