



Text: Romans 10:14-21¹

Series: Right Living – God’s Righteousness Transforming Our Lives

Title: Part 15 – **Becoming Someone Who Calls On God**

Date: October 19, 2008

Place: First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

Tonight Katie Housek will be sharing more about her ministry in Mongolia this summer and some of the wonderful things that God did there this past summer. Would you like to hear the story of how the Gospel came to Mongolia?

Bill and Amy Stearns tell the story in their book *20/20 Vision*. They wrote:

In the 1870s Swedish missionaries arrived in Mongolia—what was called "Outer Mongolia." After four decades of several teams' blood, sweat, and tears, not a single indigenous church had been established. Then in 1921 Mongolia earned the dubious distinction of being the only country in the world to voluntarily invite the Soviets to bring communism to their country. In the ensuing purge, every vestige of Christianity—as well as any other religion—was erased, and more than one million [Lamasric] Buddhist priests were slaughtered. Religion was dead in Mongolia.

In 1980 a young Mongolian whom we'll call Yi (Mongolians traditionally have only one name) went to study at a university in Moscow. Yi received an English-language Bible from a fellow student from Tanzania. "You can study English with it," the Tanzanian student explained. Yi then studied the Word for seven years, returning to Mongolia and rising to a top English interpreter position with the government. In 1987 Yi was assigned to an American big-game tourist group, which had come to Mongolia to hunt bear. Doug Coe, a Christian, was one of the tourists.

During the hunting trip Yi found the opportunity to secretly ask Doug, "Do you know God?" Doug nodded.

Three hours later, Yi was able to whisper, "What is his name?" [Doug responded,] "Jesus Christ."

In bits and pieces of stolen conversations throughout the rest of the big-game hunt, Doug was able to introduce Yi to Jesus.

"Don't worry," he told Yi. "I know it's illegal to be a Christian, and it will be hard for you. But friends will come." Then the foreign hunters left Mongolia.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission, All rights reserved.



Three years later Yi was assigned to another foreign tour group—a cowboy team of Navajo, Winnebago, Cocapaw, and other Native Americans who came to Mongolia to perform in the national nadim, a competition in horsemanship. Of course, the group was a Christian Native American cowboy team. So Yi translated their testimonies on national TV and interpreted their explanation of the Gospel to press groups and officials. Several Mongolians responded to the team's challenge to receive Christ, and Yi spent hours and hours drinking in everything the team knew about the Word. Then they too had to leave Mongolia. Yi began discipling those who'd come to Christ through the cowboys' ministry.

Then another tour group came, a few members of which happened to be pastors. The ministers, after days of intense discipling, realized the depth of Yi's Bible knowledge and the unusual bursts of his spiritual insights. So they all gathered in a hotel room in Ulaan Bataar one very cold day in November 1990 and ordained Yi as an elder of the first Mongolian church in the history of the world!

(© 2008 PreachingToday.com Bill and Amy Stearns, 20/20 Vision: Amazing Stories of What God Is Doing Around the World (Bethany House, 2005) pp.73-74; submitted by Dana Beatty, Carol Stream, Illinois)

What happened in Mongolia, what is still happening in Mongolia and what has been happening throughout the world from the time of apostles until today is summarized in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul tells us that God has a plan for bringing people into relationship with him and here it is...

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ 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? 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!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:13-17

Before we jump into how the principle outlined by Paul applies to our situation, I want us to just briefly note the original application for Paul's teaching. In verse 16, Paul wrote...

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel.”

Who were the “they” to whom Paul was referring? I believe that the NIV correctly identifies the “they” when it translates the phrase this way...

“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.” Romans 10:16 (NIV)

In chapters 9 thru 11, Paul is dealing with the implications of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by the vast majority of the Jewish people of his day. What



Paul outlines here in these few verses is the simple truth that the Gospel has been preached to the Jews by Paul and others, from one end of the Roman world to the other but that sadly many have rejected their message. Paul is writing about twenty years after Christ commissioned his disciples to “Go...and make disciples of all nations” and Paul assures his readers that the message about Jesus “has gone to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” (Romans 10:18) I’m sure he’s thinking about the Roman “world” but there is historical evidence that the disciple Thomas – we call him “Doubting Thomas” (John 20:24-29) -- got all the way to India with the Gospel message about Jesus during the time in which Paul was writing. The message was spreading to “the ends of the world.” There had been many Jews, like Paul and the other apostles, who had accepted the Gospel of Jesus but Paul acknowledged that “not all” the Jews had accepted the message he preached.

I don’t want to suggest that Paul’s original purpose for writing this Scripture isn’t important for us to think about. There are important theological implications to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and we touched on some those implications back when we were looking at Romans chapter 9 a few weeks ago. But Paul is outlining a principle here that is to be applied to the whole world, and not just to the Jewish people. The principle is found in verse 17. Paul wrote...

**“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
Romans 10:17**

Paul’s point is that in order for people to put their faith in Jesus and be saved they need to hear about Jesus. He’s already told us that...

“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.” Romans 10:9

In order for people to be saved they need to believe in Jesus. And in order to believe in Jesus, they need to hear about him. This truth applies whether you are Jewish or Gentile because, as Paul wrote,...

“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.” Romans 10:12

What does it take to become someone who calls on the Lord? How do people in this world, wherever they are and whoever they are, how do they come to call on the Lord and be saved?

Paul gives us a simple five point strategy and this morning I want us to think very carefully about where we fit in God’s strategy to bring people into relationship with him. I’m going to reverse Paul’s order and make his fifth point my beginning point.



The **first** step in God's strategy is that in order for people to hear about Jesus...

Someone needs to be sent to tell people about Jesus

“And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 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!’” Romans 10:15-16

When I came here just over ten years ago, the Lord laid on my heart the challenge of encouraging this church to be a “sending church.” What does that mean? It means that I believed that the Lord wanted this church to accelerate its work of sending out missionaries from Olds to share the message about Jesus around the world. It's been exciting to watch that happen.

Katie was sent to Mongolia this summer to tell them about Jesus and for the rest of the year she's being sent to Olds College to share Jesus' story with students at the college. J. & L. H. were sent by Wycliffe Bible Translators to help get the message about Jesus into I. and Rod & Beth Johnson are sent every day to Calgary to provide home support to them & other Wycliffe missionaries around the world. Peter & Areni Ritchie have been sent by SIM to get the message about Jesus out to the people of Angola. Troy & Naomi Johnstone and John Krajec have been sent to get the Gospel message to many nations in many languages through the ministry of GoodSeed. The Panachenkos and the Kalinins have been sent to Millerevo, Russia, to share Christ with people in the former Soviet Union. Troy & Kirstin Taylor have been sent to share the Lord with students in Lethbridge. Allan & Caulene Bussard have been sent to Slovakia, eastern Europe, Russia and Kenya to share the message about Jesus.

One of the great privileges I have had as pastor is to pray over many of these people as we send them off to serve the Lord. You might be tempted to think, “Well, that's the list of our ‘sent ones.’ Those are the people who've been sent to share Christ. What a great list!”

Yes, it's a great list of “beautiful” people who've been sent to do a wonderful thing for the Lord – but it's not the end of the list! If you're a disciple of Jesus, you're name is on that list, too. Jesus said to everyone who claims to believe in him...

“Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations...” Matthew 28:19

Jesus said...

“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” John 20:21

“Go... I am sending you” and you and you and you and you.... Please realize that...



Every believer has been sent to carry the message about Jesus to someone somewhere somehow!

You might be sent by the Lord to carry his message to Mongolia or Kenya or Indonesia, or you might be sent to carry the message about Jesus to Bowden prison, or you might be sent to carry the message to your high school, your sports team, your office or shop, your unsaved family members or your neighbours.

Notice the variety of people in the chain that God sent to bring the message of Jesus to Mongolia: A Tanzanian student at a Communist university in Moscow who gave Yi a Bible, a big-game hunter who led him to faith in Christ, a group of Native Christian cowboys who disciples him in his faith and finally a bunch of pastors who ordained him to be a “sent one” himself – Yes, I did notice who got there last but please be gentle with us! God used a group of ordinary believers who shared Jesus because they realized that wherever they were, they had been sent there by Jesus to tell people about him.

Do you understand that Jesus has sent you? Where has Jesus sent you? To who has Jesus sent you? What can you do to share the message of Jesus? If people are going to be saved, someone needs to be sent to tell them about Jesus and Jesus has already sent them someone – **you and me!**

The **second** link in the chain is that lead people into relationship with God is that...

Someone needs to proclaim the good news about Jesus

“And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” Romans 10:14

The word that is translated as “preaching” is a word that means essentially to “proclaim” or “announce.” It carries the picture with it of a herald who would publicly announce a message on behalf of a king or a governor. It’s an essential part of the plan of the King of kings to bring people into relationship with him that His message be publicly spoken by his heralds – by you and me.

It isn’t essential that the proclaiming be done by a preacher like me. It isn’t essential that the proclaiming be done from a pulpit like this. But it is essential that the message about Jesus be proclaimed. There are times when believers are constrained from speaking publicly about Jesus. But even in those situations, we can use wisdom to find ways to get the message out. Remember, it was illegal to evangelize in Mongolia but Yi and that big-game hunter still managed to find a way to speak about Jesus.



It's important to do kind, loving acts in the name of Jesus, but we can never lose the importance and the necessity of communicating the truth about Jesus in words. Those acts of love in Jesus' name serve to give power to the words we speak for Jesus' glory. Those words might come through a radio, they might come from the internet, they might come from the printed page, they might come from hushed conversations in busy streets or they might come from lay preachers proclaiming the Gospel on street corners – however they come, those words must come because people must believe in the one they have heard if they are to be saved! The Bible tells us that people who share the message about Jesus are the real “beautiful” people of the world. “How beautiful are the feet,” one preacher noted, those dirty, worn, wrinkled, leathery, scarred feet of those who have trekked many miles into remote places with the good news about Jesus.

I love the story told about Billy Graham by Graeme Keith, treasurer of the Billy Graham Association and Billy's lifelong friend. He wrote:

I was on an elevator with Billy when another man in the elevator recognized him. He said, "You're Billy Graham, aren't you?"

"Yes," Billy said.

"Well," the man said, "you are truly a great man."

Billy immediately responded, "No, I'm not a great man. I just have a great message."

(© PreachingToday.com 2008 Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham (Zondervan, 2005)

It's the message that we carry that makes us beautiful in God's eyes.

Those words about Jesus might even come from the mouth of a child. Kids can astound you with what they say. Tina Blessitt tells of how her young son fulfilled his role as a “sent one” with a message from Jesus for someone who needed to hear the Gospel. She wrote...

In the fall of 2005, my 9-year-old son, Austin, had his tonsils removed. Before the surgery, an anesthesiologist came in to start an IV. He was wearing a cool surgical cap covered in colorful frogs. Austin loved that "frog hat." When the doctor started to leave, Austin called out, "Hey, wait."

The doctor turned. "Yeah, buddy, what do you need?"

"Do you go to church?"

"No," the doctor admitted. "I know I probably should, but I don't."



Austin then asked, "Well, are you saved?"

Chuckling nervously, the doctor said: "Nope. But after talking to you, maybe it's something I should consider."

Pleased with his response, Austin answered, "Well you should, 'cause Jesus is great!"

"I'm sure he is, little guy," the doctor said, and quickly made his exit.

When Austin's surgery was finished, the anesthesiologist came into the waiting room to talk to me. He told me the surgery went well, then said, "Mrs. Blessit, I don't usually come down and talk to the parents after a surgery, but I just had to tell you what your son did."

Oh boy, I thought. What did that little rascal do now? The doctor explained that he'd just put the mask on Austin when my son signaled that he needed to say something. When the doctor removed the mask, Austin blurted, "Wait a minute, we have to pray!" The doctor told him to go ahead, and Austin prayed: "Dear Lord, please let all the doctors and nurses have a good day. And Jesus, please let the doctor with the frog hat get saved and start going to church. Amen."

The doctor admitted that this had touched him. "I was so sure he would pray that his surgery went well," he explained. "He didn't even mention his surgery. He prayed for me! Mrs. Blessit, I had to come down and let you know what a great little guy you have."

A few minutes later, a nurse came to take me to post-op. She had a big smile on her face as we walked to the elevator. "There's something you should know," she said. "Some of the other nurses and I have been witnessing to and praying for that doctor for a long time. After your son's surgery, he tracked a few of us down to tell us about Austin's prayer. He said, 'Well girls, you got me. If that little boy could pray for me when he was about to have surgery, then I think maybe I need his Jesus, too.'"

(© 2008 PreachingToday.com Tina Blessit, "A Prayer Before Surgery," Today's Christian (July/August 2006), p. 27)

The words about Jesus don't always need to be deep and profound but they need to be words that clearly point people to Him. How can you and I share the message about Jesus? How can we put in a plug for Jesus because He's "great"?

That leads me to link number **three** in God's chain in drawing people into relationship with him. People need to be sent to proclaim the message about Jesus because...



People need to hear about Jesus

**“And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? ... So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
Romans 10:14, 17**

The story about little Austin illustrates an important truth about “hearing” the Gospel. Hearing isn’t as obvious an act as it might seem. Sometimes people immediately respond to the message about Jesus and believe in him very quickly. Paul’s story of the Philippian jailer in Acts chapter 16 is that kind of moment. The jailer comes to Paul primed and ready to hear about Jesus. His first words to Paul and Silas are, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) Paul’s answer is simple...

“‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And [Paul and Silas] spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in the house. And he took them that same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.” Acts 16:31-33

That very night, at midnight, the man and his household believed and were baptized. During Katie’s ministry in Mongolia, she and her team encountered people that were primed and ready to hear the Gospel about Jesus and very quickly trusted in Christ. They heard and believed.

But there are many people, like the surgeon in the story, who take repeated “hearings” before they come to Christ. Those of you who have people you’ve been sharing Christ with for years know what I mean. The people you care for, the people you’ve shared Jesus with have “heard” the Gospel but they haven’t heard it. The penny has not dropped! The light has not gone on! The connection between the Gospel and their lives has not been bridged.

In his first letter to the believers in the city of Corinth, Paul explained this lack of understanding on the part of people who have heard the message of Jesus. He told them that...

**“The natural person [the person who does not believe in Jesus] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” 1
Corinthians 2:14**

When Paul talks about “hearing” he is talking about a bridge of meaning that carries the Bible’s story of a Saviour for sinners into the lives of sinners who need a Saviour. That bridge is something that the Holy Spirit of God constructs in the hearts of people enabling them to understand their need for a Saviour and pointing them to Jesus as the One who will save them.



This week I was corresponding by email with a person who was very concerned about how she could effectively sharing Christ with her friends. Along with speaking the word of Christ that explains who Jesus is and why he came, I encouraged this young woman to pray for her friends. I reminded her of what Jesus said about the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation. Jesus said to his disciples that he would send the Spirit to help the disciples in their mission of telling the world about Jesus. Jesus said...

“And when [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me....” John 16:8-9

I told her that until the Holy Spirit did his work of convicting people of their need for a Saviour from the consequences of their sin they would not, in fact, they could not, believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit needs to create that heart-readiness to hear the message of salvation through the word of Christ and we need to pray!

Keep praying for those people with whom you’ve shared the word of Christ! If they haven’t “heard” yet, keep praying, calling on God’s Spirit to give them a sense of their deep need for a Saviour so that they will “believe in” him.

That leads me to the **fourth** link in the chain that God uses to draw people into relationship with him.

People need to believe in Jesus

“And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? ... So faith comes from hearing ” Romans 10:14, 17

What is it to “believe” or to have “faith” in Jesus that saves? Well, first of all,

Saving faith is belief in facts about Jesus

Paul has already outlined the content of saving faith when he wrote that...

“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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Romans 10:9-10

There are **facts about who Jesus is** that we need to believe if we are to be saved. “Jesus is Lord” is the declaration that Jesus is God come to save us. “Lord” is the name by which God identified himself in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14) to the people of Israel as he was about to deliver them from slavery in



Egypt. To confess Jesus as Lord means to acknowledge that he is the sovereign God who has come to save his people. It is to confess that he is the Lord and there is no other! You cannot confess Jesus as Lord and retain allegiance to any other deity or religious leader. He alone is Lord for “the same Lord is Lord of all.” (Romans 10:12)

And there are **facts about what Jesus has done** that need to be believed. Paul calls us to believe that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. He draws our attention to the death and resurrection of Jesus as key content we need to believe. In one of his letters, Paul summarized the content of his message with these words...

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures....” 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Jesus died to pay the penalty for sinful rebellion against God for “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23) Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the proof that his death on our behalf was accepted by the Father as a satisfaction for our sin debt and it is the promise of a new, eternal life that begins the moment we believe in him and will continue on after death forever.

There is content to our faith that must be believed if someone is to be saved and it is content about who Jesus is and what he’s done. If you are still unsure about what you need to know about Jesus in order to be saved, I want to invite you to study The Gospel of Mark with me this fall. On Wednesday nights I’m leading a study called **Christianity Explored** and we’re going to look in Mark’s Gospel for the answers to three questions: Who is Jesus? Why did he come? And what does it mean to follow him?

Saving faith is more than belief in facts about Jesus, but it’s not less than belief in those facts. Secondly...

Saving faith is a personal confidence and trust in Jesus that brings a deep joy and satisfaction in Him

Paul described it as a satisfaction that makes everything else look worthless in comparison. He wrote...

“I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him...” Philipians 3:8-9



Jesus described saving faith as satisfying a hunger and thirst deep in our spirits. He said...

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” John 6:35

Mary Poplin was dean of the school of education at Claremont Graduate University when God drew her into a relationship with Jesus. She had tried many different spiritual paths but a colleague on staff began to engage her in discussion about spiritual matters and after Mary had had a spiritual crisis, he gave her a Bible and they began to study it together. Over several months they discussed what she was reading. One weekend, Poplin went to church with her mother. She recalls...

When we got there, I was really moved to just go up to the altar and give my life to the Lord. It wasn't even an altar call. It was a communion call. The guy said, you don't have to be a member of any church to take communion. You just have to believe that Jesus Christ lived, that he died for your sins, and you have to want him in your life. And when he said that, I was so powerfully moved that I actually thought, even if a tornado rips through this building, I'm going to get that communion.

I took the communion, and I didn't even listen to the guy. I knelt down and said, "Please come and get me. Please come and get me. Please come and get me." And when I took the communion and I said that, I felt free. I felt like tons of things had been lifted off of me. And I began to have an insatiable desire to read the Bible.

(© 2008 PreachingToday.com "The Dick Staub Interview: Mary Poplin Calls Claremont Her 'Calcutta,'" ChristianityToday.com (posted 12-10-03)

Have you believed in Jesus? Have you trusted in him? Have you rested your life in him? Have you found your rest in him?

At this point, you might think we've come to the end of God's process. Having believed in Jesus, you are his child forever. What more could happen? But there's one more step to take in God's process of bringing people into relationship with him.

People have been sent with a message from the King of kings, they have preached that message, and people have heard the Gospel and believed in Christ. This whole chain of events was set in motion by God so that, **finally**, we might become...

People who call on God



“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?” Romans 10:14

Paul uses the expression “to call upon the Lord” as a summary of our whole relationship with God. Paul opens his letter to the believers in Corinth with these words...

“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 1:2-3

Calling upon Jesus isn’t only something that happens the moment we are saved. It is something that must continue to happen day after day, year after year in our relationship with him because we need Him. Calling on him is a declaration of our dependence on Him for everything we need in life.

God has set this whole chain of events in motion so that he might bring us into a relationship with himself and the way to keep that relationship dynamic and alive is to call on him. King David knew the secret of that intimate relationship and he tells us that...

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” Psalm 145:18

God invites us to call upon him when we need him because he delights to help us and care for us. He invites us with the words...

“call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” Psalm 50:15

God promises...

“Call to me and I will answer you.” Jeremiah 33:3

But even better, he says...

“Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.” Isaiah 65:24

This week I was sharing with one of our folks who is going through a tough time. I said “you need to keep things simple right now and I encourage you to simply ‘call upon the Lord.’ Call on him, cry out to him, talk with him, even shout to him if you need to, but call on him because you need Him.”



Have you believed in Jesus? If you have, I invite you to call on Him this morning for whatever you need. I invite you to keep calling on him every day this week, telling him that you love him, asking him your questions, crying your pains, celebrating your joys, presenting your needs – calling upon Him.

Let's call on him together. Let's lift up our lives to him this morning. The worship team is going to lead us in singing "To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul" and while we're singing, if you would like someone to join you in prayer, our prayer team is ready to call on the Lord with you and for you. Just make your way to the front while we're singing and one of the team will come and pray with you.

Let's call on the Lord.

Song: To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul

Benediction