

How Far Will You Go?

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MAIN POINT

God calls everyone who is in Christ to go and share the gospel with those who are lost.

INTRODUCTION

If you were to create a bucket list (or if you already have) what is one thing that would be on it?

What would you say is one of the most adventurous things you've experienced in life so far?

Would you characterize your Christian life as adventurous? Why or why not?

The call to go and make disciples is a great adventure! It won't fit the mold of what we typically tend to view as adventuresome, in the sense that we can capture it in a cool photo for social media that gets a lot of likes. But we can be sure of this—God is at work, and He invites believers to join in the great privilege and adventure of that work. We do that by sharing the gospel with those who are lost.

UNDERSTANDING

READ [ACTS 2:36-38,41](#).

How does the adventure of Christian community begin in this passage?
What do the people do first?

Life's best adventure—the call to go and make disciples— always begins with repentance, turning away from our sin and putting our trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior. On the day of Pentecost, the day Peter preached this powerful sermon about Jesus, three thousand people came to faith.

Which part of the story seems most adventurous to you personally: Peter's unapologetic sermon or the massive demonstration of God's Spirit as 3,000 people turned to Christ and were baptized? Is the Christian life still adventuresome if God acts on a smaller quantitative scale?

Why do you think we often look and long for impressive Christian adventure over the kind that, though equally miraculous, may go largely unnoticed (Ex. a massive worship service with a great band and powerful speaker over the quiet obedience of sharing Christ with your neighbor)?

Based on this passage, where must we begin to see God at work in both big and small ways in our community?

READ [ROMANS 10:9-15](#).

Why is confessing Jesus as Lord the foundation of the Christian faith?

The phrase “believe in your heart” refers to genuine faith, an absolute trust that God made salvation possible and available to all when He raised Jesus from the dead. Saving faith focuses solely on Jesus the risen Lord. Our commitment is in our heart, and our confession is outward or external, telling others what is happening in our heart. The commitment, or belief, and confession go together.

In terms of the call to go and make disciples, is Jesus Lord of your life? Explain.

What are some of the most common excuses Christians give for not sharing the gospel?

How does verse 14 help you better understand the importance of having conversations about Jesus?

How do these verses challenge you to be more proactive about sharing the gospel?

In [Romans 10:14](#), Paul shared how God saves people. It is not through seeing His handiwork in creation (see [Romans 1:20](#)). It is not through our own good works (see [Romans 9:32](#)). Instead, it is through the sharing of the gospel. No one will be saved apart from hearing the gospel and believing in Christ as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. We are God’s chosen instrument through which God declares His gospel message to the world. Our friends and family members who do not hear the gospel will not be saved.

If we do not share the gospel with our lost friends, their only hope to be saved is to hear the gospel from someone else. As Christians, we possess the best news in the universe that has the power to change the eternal destinies of those we love. Why wouldn’t we tell them the good news about Jesus?

Why do you think God chose people to spread the gospel? What do we learn about God from His choice to spread the gospel through people like us?

God doesn’t need us to deliver the gospel to the world. If He wanted, God could write the gospel in the clouds or proclaim it from the heavens. God doesn’t need us, but He has chosen us as His instruments through which the gospel would be proclaimed to all nations ([Acts 1:8](#); [Matthew 28:18-20](#)). God chose to spread the gospel through us because He loves us and delights to share His work with us.

APPLICATION

What is one step you could take this week to familiarize yourself with the gospel message so that you might be prepared to share it with others?

What is keeping you from sharing the gospel? What attitudes, actions, or priorities might need to change in your life for you to begin actively sharing Christ with others?

Who is one person you need to share the gospel with this week? What steps will you take this week to do this?

PRAYER

Thank God for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Ask Him to help us understand the gospel so that we might clearly articulate it to our lost friends and family members. Thank God for calling us out of our sin to join Him in His adventurous kingdom work. Ask God to

give the members of your group boldness to speak the gospel to those around them this week.

COMMENTARY

ACTS 2:36-41

2:36. Peter addressed his words specifically to Jews (the house of Israel) and affirmed that Jesus whom they crucified was both “Lord and Messiah.” By calling Jesus “Lord and Messiah,” Peter was staking the biggest possible claims. “Lord” is reserved in the Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint) for “God” (Yahweh). Thus Peter says Jesus is God. Peter further noted that Jesus was the Messiah (anointed one), Israel’s hope for salvation.

2:37. Peter’s audience came under deep conviction because they realized their guilt in the execution of Jesus, plus they were convinced by Peter’s passionate eyewitness testimony and his description of how the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled OT prophecies about the promised Messiah. This prompted them to ask the question that anyone hearing the gospel should ask, “Brothers, what must we do?”

2:38. Peter’s answer indicates three major components in conversion. One must repent, which means turning from sin; be baptized in the name of Jesus to publicly declare our repentance and faith and symbolically identify us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and have the Holy Spirit, given as a gift and seal of conversion, empowering the believer for the life of faith.

2:41. In response to Peter’s preaching, Luke commented in an understated way that about 3,000 people were added to the community of believers. Note the close link between coming to faith and being baptized. There was apparently no delay between profession of faith and baptism. The large number of converts (“3,000”) was made possible by the huge crowds who had traveled to Jerusalem from all over the Mediterranean region for the Passover celebration.

ROMANS 10:9-15

10:8-11. These verses deal with “the word of faith.” Verse 9 says what it is; verse 10 explains it; verse 11 offers assurance of its veracity based on a promise from the Old Testament. The word of faith is not a word in the literal sense, but is a “message”—essentially a condensed summary of the gospel. It is the message that a person must receive in order to become a Christian. Specifically, in the case of Israel, it is a message that hits at the heart of their religious beliefs. “Jesus is Lord” is thought to be the oldest Christian confessional statement, and as such was a clear expression of the deity of Christ. Lord (kurios) was the Greek word used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translate the Hebrew “Yahweh,” the personal name of God, sacred to the Jews.

For a Jew to confess “Jesus is Lord” would be to ascribe deity to Jesus of Nazareth, the very source of the Jewish outrage that led to his crucifixion in Jerusalem. There is no mistaking Paul’s intent in formalizing the requirement for salvation when speaking of a Jewish nation locked in unbelief (though the same formula of faith existed for Gentiles; see [1 Corinthians 12:3](#); [Philippians 2:11](#)). Jesus was the “stone” which Israel had stumbled over just twenty-five years earlier in Jerusalem, the stone that was still squarely in the middle of their path.

But confessing Jesus is Lord is not the whole gospel. In fact, it is the outward, public manifestation of a heart-held belief. Thus comes the other half of the word of faith,

affirmation that Christ had indeed been resurrected from the dead. The resurrection was an essential part of apostolic preaching in the early days of the gospel ministry and became a central part of Paul's teaching to the churches. It is interesting to compare the apostle Paul's consistent emphasis upon the resurrection as a validating factor for the Christian faith. Indeed, if there is no resurrection, there is no Christianity.

What the heart believes, the mouth confesses. Belief and confession are like faith and works—the truly saved will always ultimately manifest a complementary expression of their new life in Christ. Faith can give way immediately to confession as it did with the apostle Paul ([Acts 9:20-22](#)), or it may come slowly as with some Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus but were bound by fear ([John 12:42](#)). Ultimately, however, Jesus Himself indicates that confession of our faith is a requirement, even in the face of impending persecution ([Matthew 10:32-33](#)).

Paul's language here has confused some people over what one must do to be saved. Ultimately, there is only one thing: believe ([Genesis 15:6](#)). But here Paul says two “things” must be done: confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in the resurrection. But other passages would suggest that repentance, baptism, being born again, entering the kingdom, and having faith are all required. They are and they are not. They are in the sense that every true Christian will have done them all. They are not unless the one element—faith—is present.

Paul's paralleling of justification with salvation is not a word game or a play on words. We are justified by our belief in the person and work of Christ (represented here by the resurrection), but we are saved—confirmed in our faith and carried to the portals of the kingdom of God—by the outworking of our faith (here represented by confession). One cannot choose justification (belief) without salvation (confession), or vice versa. Unless God's providence directs otherwise (witness the thief), the normal Christian life is lived under the power of both. Finally, Paul comes full circle on his quotation from [Isaiah 28:16](#) in [Romans 9:33](#) by citing again the last part of verse 16. To stumble over the stone which is Christ is to fall into unbelief; to embrace the stone (believe and confess) is to have security forever.

10:12-13. Paul has finished comparing righteousness by the law with righteousness by faith. The evidence is that, just as in the Old Testament when God made His will readily available to Israel so that they might embrace it and live by it, so God has made His will available “today.” And His will for everyone, Jew and Gentile, is faith in Christ. Here Paul concludes with a promise from the Old Testament, from [Joel 2:32](#).

Given Paul's clear teaching that all, without exception, have sinned ([Romans 3:23](#)), it is only consistent that God's salvation should come to all ([Romans 3:22](#)). Remembering that the mission of Israel was to receive salvation from God and then be “a light for the Gentiles” ([Isaiah 42:6](#); [49:6](#); [Luke 2:32](#); [Acts 13:47](#); [26:23](#)) also substantiates the expansion of Joel's prophecy to include the Gentiles. This is another example of the Old Testament prophets not fully realizing the extent of what they wrote, which necessitated the revealing of the mystery of Jews and Gentiles being brought together in one body.

Though Paul does not use the word, Joel's prophecy was a promise ([Acts 2:39](#)). In this section directed at Israel's unbelief, Paul is promising Israel that the gospel is accessible to them; they can believe it; it will save them forever—they will be saved if they call on the name of the Lord. The irony of this entire passage is that while the task was originally to get the Gentiles included in what Israel was given, now the tables have turned. It is Israel who needs to be included in what the Gentiles are readily accepting. Paul will delve into this irony—and reveal the reason for it—in the next chapter.

Romans 10:14-15. Calling requires faith. In the Old Testament, calling on the name of the Lord was a metaphor for worship and prayer ([Genesis 4:26](#); [12:8](#); [Psalm 116:4](#)). No one can call out to God who has not believed in Him. Faith requires hearing. More than anything else, this question is the crux of all missiological activity since the first century. God has ordained that people have to hear (or read, or otherwise understand the content of) the word of God in order to be saved. One who knows the gospel must communicate it to one who does not know it.