

ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH
GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY & MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY – Chapters 9-11

LESSON 37 – WHY PEOPLE ARE LOST – Romans 10:16-21

As we close out chapter ten, we will see why it is people are still lost after hearing the Gospel message. Unfortunately in our day, we have a communication problem. God gave us the message of His Word as clearly as we could ever want it, but somehow we tend to complicate the message. We must remember that when peoples’ eternal destinies are at stake, the clarity of the Gospel message is a serious matter.

The Christian faith can be stated simply, considered rationally and believed firmly when it is communicated clearly. We saw in our last lesson that if we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. In a time when confusing religious messages are everywhere, the simplicity of the Gospel is key in winning people to the Lord.

The problem here in chapter ten is that Israel rejected this very simple message of the Gospel. How could Israel receive such a simple message and still be lost? Well that’s a very good question and will be the focus of this lesson. We will look at several questions to try and shed some light on this issue.

Was The Message Dispatched?

Verse 15 answers this question with an absolute YES. God send the prophets to Israel as well as prophets and apostles to the early church to declare and preserve the message of the Gospel. The Bible is the evidence that the message of the Gospel was sent by God. No one is lost because the message wasn’t sent out to the world.

Was The Message Delivered?

Again...the answer is yes. When Paul says, “not all accepted the good news,” it’s clear that some did. So the Gospel was in fact delivered. The problem in Paul’s day...just like it is in our day...is not that the message isn’t delivered, it’s that people choose not to believe it.

Was The Message Deciphered?

Messengers were sent and the message was delivered, maybe the problem was the people didn’t hear it. Well Paul does away with that argument right away by asking, “Did the not hear?” Then following that up by saying, “Of course they did...”

Understand this...people aren’t lost because the message wasn’t sent, delivered or heard; people are lost because they choose not to believe. Paul says that everyone is responsible for hearing and accepting God’s message. The truth is mankind has rejected all of God’s revelation from creation to Christ and as a result, most people who hear the Gospel will reject it. Paul’s letter to the Romans removed every excuse for not believing in Christ.

Was The Message Discerned?

Maybe people receive the message without understanding what it means. In verse 19 Paul takes this excuse away as well. Remember the Jews were immersed in the Law. Under the Law they had the most complete revelation of God given to anyone. The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah but they didn’t believe it and cast it all aside. So God took the message and gave it to people who didn’t know anything...the Gentiles...and they believed it.

This meant that the Gospel message was clearly understandable but the Jews chose to not believe it. It wasn't that they didn't understand, they just didn't like what they understood.

Was The Message Discovered?

Paul makes the answer to this question clear by quoting from Isaiah 65:1, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

The message wasn't hidden...it wasn't too hard to find. In fact, it was found by people who weren't even looking for it...the Gentiles. How could people who were supposed to be looking miss something that was discovered by people who weren't looking at all?

Israel...nor anyone else for that matter...can claim they are lost because the message is hard to find or hard to understand. Paul gives the real reason in verse 21.

Was The Message Disobeyed?

Yes. People are lost because they disobey the message of God. The harsh reality is this... If you are lost today, it is because you have chosen to be lost. The Gospel message has been simply shared and explained over and over and over again. My prayer...as it always is...please make sure you are saved.

Was The Message Demonstrated?

There are three things we learn about the message that God has sent to the world.

God's Love Is Continuous – His revelation in nature declares His glory "all day long." His Spirit is leading people every day to share the message of salvation. If you don't know Him, His love is pursuing you and will not stop.

God's Love Is Compassionate – The hands that God holds out "all day long" are hands of compassion. One day Jesus was approached by a leper nobody would dare touch but He stretched out His hand and touched the man. On another occasion, two blind men asked for healing and Jesus touched their eyes with His hand. The leper was cured and the blind men received their sight.

Jesus' hands were always healing, blessing and saving. They are hands of compassion that reach out to the lost and hurting. His hands touch many when He was on earth and continue to reach out and touch those in need. Jesus' helping and healing hands are the way His compassionate love reaches out day after day.

God's Love Is Costly – Whenever the church celebrates communion, we are reminded of just how costly God's love truly was. The shed blood of Jesus on the cross tells it all. God gave up His one and only Son to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world. This was the price He paid so we could be saved. There is no question how costly the love of God is.

The compassionate and costly love of God is seen clearly in the last verse of Romans 10. Love is there... compassion is there...understanding is there...and a welcome is there. God extends His invitation "all day long."