



Group Discussion Guide

Romans 10:14-21

For groups meeting May 17 evening through May 24 morning.

Paul shared the good news that salvation by faith is available to all who call on the name of the Lord (v. 13). In the next section of his letter, he outlined the need for those who would spread this good news (vs. 14-15). He used a series of questions to demonstrate this need as he laid out the specifics of how the Gospel is shared with others: 1) God sends people to share the message, 2) those people preach the message of Christ, 3) those who hear the message believe and 4) those who believe call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Paul, however, described this process in reverse order, starting with a person calling on the name of the Lord. Using this order and phrasing the entire process in the form of questions, Paul made a compelling case for people to answer the call of God to preach the Gospel.

The Apostle's use of Isaiah is extensive in this chapter. This begins with verse 15, as Paul quoted Isaiah 52:7 to reinforce the privilege of carrying the message of God to others. Isaiah wrote to Judah, announcing that God would end the nation's time in exile. However, Paul applied this reference to the spread of the good news of the Gospel throughout the world. This is not uncommon in the New Testament:

In the New Testament this whole section of the book of Isaiah, from chapter 40 on, is applied to the gospel age. The deliverance from Babylonian exile under Cyrus, like the deliverance from Egyptian servitude in the days of Moses, is treated as the foreshadowing of the greater and perfect deliverance accomplished by Christ.

F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 205–206.

As with the prophets of old, those who carried the message of the Gospel in the first century encountered those who chose to reject the truth about Jesus Christ (v. 16). Again, Paul went back to Isaiah to reinforce this rejection of the message, and his use of Isaiah 53:1 is especially powerful considering this entire section of the prophet's writing refers to the "suffering servant" who is the Messiah. Paul also used this quote to support the importance of hearing the Gospel; it is through hearing the "word of Christ" that people are able to come to faith in him (v. 17).

In the next four verses, Paul shared the reality of Israel's rejection of the Messiah. He quoted Psalm 19:4, which demonstrates the witness of God's creation and how God's glory is clearly seen in the majesty of the sky and stars, and the knowledge of God is seen each day and night. Paul used this quote to draw a comparison of the general revelation of creation and the spread of the Gospel; just as the stars could be seen by everyone on the earth, so the Gospel was being

spread to everyone throughout the world. Israel, he wrote, had heard the Word of the Lord. Next, Paul addressed the question of understanding, and he quoted Deuteronomy 32:21 and pointed out that God already had communicated how Israel's rejection of Him would result in God sharing the message of His grace with Gentile nations. He had given clear commands, and Israel had ignored them.

Finally, Paul quoted again from Isaiah to demonstrate how God had chosen to pour out His grace on Gentile nations while still extending salvation to Israel (vs. 20-21, quoted from Isaiah 65:1-2). Those who were outside of the nation of Israel had not sought after Him or called to Him, and yet God chose to reveal the Gospel to these people. And although most Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God continued to offer salvation to His chosen people.

Discussion Questions

1. After reading and seriously considering Paul's words in verses 14-15, what are your thoughts on the importance of sharing the Gospel?
2. How do you think Jewish readers of this letter would react to Paul's application of Isaiah 52:7 to the spread of the Gospel (v.15), in light of the fact that the original statement was in reference to God delivering the kingdom of Judah from exile?
3. What is your personal responsibility in "preaching" the Gospel? Do you see yourself as included in Paul's outline of how the Gospel is spread throughout the world?
4. Paul points out the reality that not everyone will believe the Gospel (v. 16). Why is it important for us to remember this? How should we react when someone seems to reject Christ?
5. What are some different ways that people "hear" the "word of Christ"? How should we who believe seek to use these different means to share the message of the Gospel?
6. What do you think is Paul's overall message in verses 18-21, where he uses various quotes from the Old Testament?