**Lesson 28: The Missing Link in the Chain of Salvation**

Text: Romans 10:14-21

**Introduction**

In the previous lesson, we saw that the Jews were wrong about righteousness. Instead of receiving God’s gift of righteousness, they attempted to produce their own. We also saw that the way to salvation is available to all who will believe! Israel could be saved if they would receive God’s offer of righteousness by faith. The same is true for all the people of the earth. If salvation is that simple, why is Israel predominately in unbelief? What is missing? The spiritual condition of Israel illustrates the condition of other people groups. There are two reasons that people remain in their lost condition. We will analyze those two reasons in the remainder of Romans 10.

1. **The first reason people remain lost is that they have never heard the gospel. (v. 14-15)**
   1. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and provided all that is necessary for salvation. (Luke 19:10)
   2. Those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)
   3. If those who call on the Lord will be saved, what is necessary for them to be able to call on the name of the Lord? Follow Paul’s line of reasoning. (v. 14-15)
      1. They cannot call upon the Lord if they have not believed.
      2. They cannot believe if they have not heard.
      3. They cannot hear if no one proclaims the good news to them.
      4. They cannot proclaim good news if they have not been sent.
   4. Those who proclaim the message of the gospel are a blessing to those who hear. (v. 15b)
      1. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 indicating that God has sent preachers to Israel. The context of this verse is the good news that the Jews will be set free from Babylon. Paul applies it to those who are messengers of the gospel. They proclaim the freedom from sin’s penalty through Jesus Christ.
      2. There is still a great need for preachers to set foot on new territory for the sake of the gospel.
   5. The point Paul makes in this section is that many remain lost because they have never heard.
      1. There is no “Plan B” with God. When Jesus commissioned the church to take the message of His death, burial, and resurrection to all the inhabitants of the earth, He did not have a backup plan. All must hear in order to be saved.
      2. This passage should stir those who have believed the gospel to zealously make sure that others have an opportunity to hear the gospel.
      3. A large percentage of the world’s population remains in their lost condition because they have never heard the gospel. Thus, the missing link for many is hearing.
   6. Was this the situation with Israel? No! God sent preachers to proclaim the gospel to them. In the next section, Paul demonstrates that Israel remains lost for another reason.
2. **The second reason people remain lost is because they reject the gospel. (v. 16-21)** 
   1. Paul said that some have not obeyed the gospel. (v. 16)
      1. Obeying the gospel is equivalent to believing the gospel. (Romans 1:5; 2:8; 6:17)
      2. He quotes Isaiah 53:1, a passage that clearly presents the gospel in the Old Testament. Israel could not claim ignorance!
   2. The missing ingredient for the Jews is faith. “Verse 16 is therefore the center of this paragraph and expresses its main point. In this verse, Paul identifies the link in the chain of requirements leading to salvation that is missing for so many people: faith.” (Douglas Moo)
   3. The religious Jews did not remain in unbelief because they had a lack of access to the gospel. Jesus came to them, but they rejected Him (John 1:11). The Lord stood in their midst. He preached to them. He performed miracles before them. He was crucified before them. He was buried. He rose again. He appeared to multiple witnesses who announced His resurrection to them. Still, they remained in unbelief. They refused to receive God’s offer of salvation!
   4. Hearing is essential. (v. 17) In this verse, Paul returned to the link in the chain that precedes belief (v. 14). A person cannot believe if he or she has not heard. This, however, was not Israel’s problem.
   5. Paul said that the Jews have indeed heard! (v. 18) He used wording from Psalm 19:4 to reveal that the message came to their ears.
      1. The intent of Psalm 19:4 is to convey that nature reveals the existence of God.
      2. In the context of Romans, Paul is using this verse as an analogy. “As God’s word of general revelation has been proclaimed all over the earth, so God’s word of special revelation, in the gospel, has been spread all over the earth.” (Douglas Moo)
   6. Not only has Israel heard, but they also understood! (v. 19) Paul quoted Deuteronomy 32:21 as evidence that Israel knew the true and living God, but turned to idolatry. As a result, God used the conversion of Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. The repentance of the Gentiles should have caused the Jews to return to the Lord.
      1. Paul quoted Isaiah 65:1 to demonstrate that the Gentiles would come to Christ. (v. 20)
      2. Yet, Israel remained obstinate! (v. 21) Paul applied Isaiah 65:2 to disobedient Israel. It is clearly God’s will to save Israel, but it is Israel’s will to continue in their own way.
      3. They rejected God’s gracious offer of righteousness through Jesus Christ.
3. **Central Idea: Israel remained in their lost condition because they rejected the gospel.**
4. **Application** 
   1. Since the lost cannot believe and call upon Christ without hearing the gospel, we should obey Christ’s command to go into the world with the message of the gospel (Mark 16:15).
      1. There are people residing within Oklahoma City who have not heard a clear presentation of the gospel.
      2. There are places within our world that have little to no access to the gospel. We must pray that God might send laborers into these regions. If you pray, you must also be willing to go.
   2. We will encounter resistance as we proclaim the gospel. The fact of Israel’s resistance did not keep God from sending prophets to them. We should not allow resistance to keep us from delivering the message that has been entrusted to us.

**Conclusion**

Paul addressed the reason Israel failed to call upon the Lord Jesus for salvation. It was not due to a lack of effort on God’s part. Jesus died and rose again to provide righteousness. It was not because no one informed Israel regarding their Messiah. They persisted in unbelief because they didn’t want to believe the gospel. We cannot make people believe, but we can make sure that they hear! In the coming lesson, we will see that God still hasn’t given up on Israel!