



You know what's crazy? Just Friday I realized that we started the book of Romans exactly one year ago--on September 15 of last year. I trust that it has been of benefit to you so far. I know it has been for me.

Sometimes a video is worth a thousand words, so what I want to do is read the rest of chapter ten and then [watch a video](#) with you.

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Joel 2:32)

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?

15 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!” (Isa 52:7) 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” (Isa 53:1) 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” (Psalm 19:4)

19 But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.” (Deut. 32:21)

20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been found by those who did not seek me;

I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.” (Isa. 65:1)

21 But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.” (Isa 65:2)

How *are* they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? This morning we are going to talk about the beautiful feet of those who bring good news. This is fifth part of our series called *Proclaim*. Let me remind you of what we are building upon.

- 1. Proclaim on your knees**-my prayer to God for them is that they may be saved
- 2. Proclaim out of your heart's desire**-my hearts desire for them is that they may be saved.
- 3. Proclaim with clarity**- they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge
- 4. Proclaim with the need for submission**- they did not submit to God's righteousness

5. Proclaim from history-*For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."*

This morning we will add point number six to our list.

6. Proclaim to the nations-*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*

How many beautiful feet do you know? How many believers do you know that have left family and friends to put down roots in a foreign land? Most of the time the language is different. The food and culture are different. The climate is different. I saw on facebook last week that Mindy Seeley actually has to put a sweater on as it so col. Of course cool for them would still be balmy for us. Their summers are absolutely brutal.

Speaking of the Seeleys, did you see their blog post last week? Here is a snippet of what Mindy wrote.

Many of you may know that there are few things I (Mindy) treasure more than spending time with my family. Time as a family with all our children brings me more joy than anything money can buy. So when we were able to use airline miles to purchase tickets for Garrett and Logan to come home for Christmas this year, I was more than excited. My joy and excitement was dampened mildly (Ok, I concede...a LOT) by the fact that Andrew and Katie would not be coming here this year nor would we be going to Minnesota to see them.¹

You can feel her mother's heart bleed over the lost time with family. Of course lots of missionaries serve much further away but the Seeleys have made significant sacrifices for the sake of the gospel. They have beautiful feet as they serve the Lord in the Bahamas.

People have been using their beautiful feet fitted with shoes prepared for the gospel for centuries. This is why you should all be reading missionary biographies and become familiar with the heroes of the faith; men and woman "of whom the world was not worthy," as the book of Hebrews puts it (Hebrews 13:38). You should know about the William Carey and Hudson Taylors of the world.

What I love about Paul quoting this verse from Isaiah 52 is that he himself had beautiful feet, didn't he? No one in the early church traveled as far and preached the gospel as often as the apostle Paul. Do you recall what his commissioning service sounded like? I am not referring to the one in Acts 13 where the church in Antioch sent them off. That one was rather straightforward. *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off* (Acts 13:2-3). That sounds a lot like what we do for a commissioning service, doesn't it? We did this just a few weeks ago when the Haiti team was sent off. As the sending church for the Seeleys, we did this for them at their commissioning service.

No, the commissioning to which I am referring is the one that the Lord gave to Paul through Ananias. The Lord said, *"Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name"* (Acts 9:15-16). How would you like that for your commissioning

service? I would like prayers of protection and even a little bit of prosperity thrown in for good measure, but not for Paul. His beautiful feet were destined to suffer, as so many throughout history have done.

But beautiful feet did not begin with Paul because this was written down by the prophet Isaiah in the 7th century BC. As I read this, notice the progression. See if you can detect a strategy--a way that the good news was intended to spread.

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
8The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.
9Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
10The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.*

Did you see the pattern, the progression, the strategy--whatever you want to call it? Start with verse 7- *who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."* So, to whom is the salvation message spoken here? Zion is another name for Jerusalem so it is spoke to Israel. The people with "beautiful feet" were those who praised the Lord from the mountain tops of Israel. Zion is mentioned again in verse eight and Jerusalem is mentioned twice in verse nine. They were preaching to themselves. Israelites preaching to the fellow Israelites

But did you see the next level of progression or strategy? Look at verse 10. *The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.* The salvation of the Lord is on display for all nations, for all people, to the ends of the earth. The Lord made his covenant with the Jews first. They were his chosen people. His word and his will were first revealed to them. But their worship of the Lord was supposed to spread through them and by them.

And it just so happens that this is exactly how God planned it from the beginning. Listen to the first words God ever spoke to his chosen people through Abraham. *And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing* (Genesis 12:2). And a few years later, God filled in the promise. *Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations* (Genesis 17:4). So Abraham was to be the father of many nations, of a vast multitude of people. And God blessed Abraham so that he

would be a blessing to all of these nations. Salvation was given to the Jews with the express purpose that it would spread to all nations and all people. That's the exact same progression that we see in Isaiah 52.

We all know what happens when you throw a stone into a body of water. It makes a splash and then a concentric circle of waves extend out from the middle. This is exactly how we should understand our salvation. The stone that was thrown into the water was Abraham himself. Abraham was the first splash. Now you might wonder, "For something as important as the salvation of the world, why did God begin with such a small splash? Why didn't he start bigger and better? He could have done so, so why didn't he?"

Do you remember what the military campaign was called when the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003? They called it the "Shock and Awe" campaign. The goal was to so overwhelm the Iraqi military that it would leave them dazed and confused. If your enemy is presented with a staggering and paralyzing force all at once, they are much more likely to give up and surrender.

The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a shock and awe campaign. The devastation of the bombs shattered their resolve. And it worked. One week later the Japanese surrendered. The German blitzkrieg was meant to have the same effect. The Roman Legions in the days of the New Testament had a war doctrine that read as follows. "Achieving shock and awe rests in the ability to deter and overpower an adversary through the adversary's perception and fear of his vulnerability and our own invincibility."² Before the Romans, this is how Alexander the Great marched across the known world and overwhelmed every foe in a mere eight years. Of course that was all clearly prophesied by the prophet Daniel.

So here's my point. With his infinite knowledge and infinite power, why did God not initiate a "shock and awe" campaign in Genesis 12? What do you do when you want to make a big splash in a pool? You do a "cannon ball" or a "jackknife," right? You do your best big splash move to create the biggest splash possible. God could have cannon-balled into history. He could have shocked and awed the whole world all at once so that we immediately surrendered to his sovereign power and will. That's certainly how I would have done it.

But he didn't. Instead, he dropped a small stone into the water. Plop. One man. One family. That's hardly shock and awe, is it? But that's how God chose to do it. If you want to talk shock and awe--do you know what was shocking and awesome? The resurrection of Jesus Christ was shocking and awesome. The event has changed the world but the day it happened it was still just a slightly bigger plop into the water, at least in terms of how many people actually knew about it.

But God has his ways and his plans, and we know they are *always* better than ours. And God chose to bring salvation to one man in the middle of the desert. *And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. A concentric circle of blessing proceeding out in all directions. Let me show you what this concentric circle looks like from Romans 15.*

9 *"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."*

This is what Isaiah meant about those with beautiful feet. *How beautiful upon the mountains*

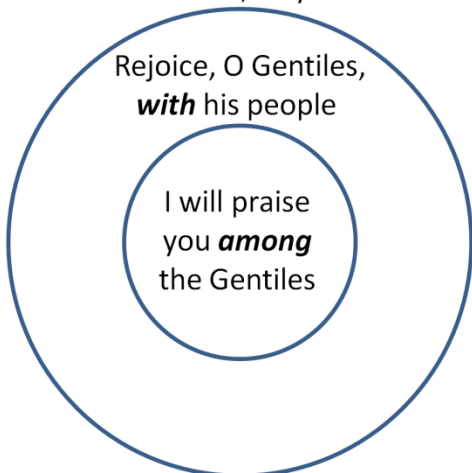
*are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

The Israelites were to praise the Lord among the Gentiles. They were not given an explicit missionary calling like we see in the New Testament and the book of Acts. No one ever told Abraham to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). It wasn't that kind of mission work.

But there were still beautiful feet. They were to stand on the figurative mountain tops of their cities and town and proclaim God's salvation. They were to be filled with the knowledge and deep conviction that "Your God reigns." This was supposed to be Israelites calling other Israelites to worship their God.

The next level proceeds outward in Romans 15:10. *And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."* First, the Jews were to worship *among* the Gentiles. Now the Gentiles are

Praise the Lord, all you **Gentiles**



worshipping **with** God's people. In the Old Testament there were Jews by birth and there were Jewish converts. But these converts were Jewish through and through. They completely left behind their old pagan ways and adopted the culture, lifestyle and religious practice of the Israelites. Except for their birthright, they were Jewish. They worshipped with and alongside God's people.

and let **all the peoples** extol him.

The concentric waves that began with the small plop in the water from Abraham reaches its full extension in 15:11. And again, "Praise the Lord, all you *Gentiles*, and let *all the peoples* extol him." Can you grasp this outer ring? This is not just a few Jewish converts worshipping with the Jews. This is all Gentiles, all nations, extolling the praises of the Almighty. This is Paul taking the gospel to the far reaches of the Roman world. This is Hudson Taylor taking the gospel into the interior of China where the name of Jesus was yet unknown. This is one or two people carrying the gospel to the Himalayas to reach people who know nothing of Jesus and our precious faith.

This is all began with a splash of Abraham in Genesis 12 and it will be complete when Christ returns in glory. But do you see where it all begins for you and me? Now I am not referring to Abraham, but to our personal proclamation of the gospel? Do you see where it starts? It starts with worship. Worship is at the dead center of proclamation.

7. Proclaim out of your worship.

The beautiful feet described by Isaiah proclaimed God's reign to their own people. If you proclaim that "our God reigns," what is that called? That's worship! If you are to ever proclaim

the name of Christ to someone who does not know him, this must flow out of your personal worship of Christ. If you are enamored with Jesus, you will tell others about Jesus. If you are bored with Jesus, you never say anything to anyone. This is why the beautiful feet of those who carry the good news begin with their own people. They begin with themselves. They begin with their own personal worship.

This is why I love how John Piper puts it in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*.

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more.³

So if the goal of all missions is worship, then it makes sense that missions and evangelism and proclamation begins with worship. Worship is both the end *and* the beginning. Worship is, as Piper says, ultimate because God is ultimate.

Does God reign? Of course you will say yes. That's the "correct" answer. But does he reign in your own heart and mind? For you personally, does he reign over all? Is your worship overflowing such that you want to proclaim God's salvation, even if it's just to one another? If so, you have beautiful feet. You are bringing *good news of happiness and publishing salvation*.

You may have heard it said that if you are not witnessing to your neighbors, then by all means don't travel to another country and expect to witness to them. But I would say, if you are not worshipping God deeply now, don't attempt to go to another country and proclaim the gospel. It just won't work.

Do you know who else has beautiful feet? The Storbakken family. Today is their last Sunday with us before they fly back to China. I've asked them to come forward so that we can pray for them. For those who don't know, Jacob is Holmberg's son. He has been serving in China for 14 years where he met his wife, Abi. This family has beautiful feet. Jacob, Abi, Sarah, Sequoia and little Seth. They have sacrificed for the gospel. I don't think it is not a coincidence that their last Sunday with us that I was preaching on this passage in Romans 10.

Let me share two passages with you.

and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." (Romans 15:20-21)

This family has beautiful feet because they share with people who don't know Jesus. Maybe they have heard the name Jesus but they don't have a clue who he is and what he has done.

They may not like me bringing up this next verse but I'm going to do it anyway.

So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men (Philippians 2:29).

I believe that the Bible is telling us to honor people like the Storbakken family. Honor them for the sacrifices that they make. Honor them because they have followed the Lord in obedience when He called them to difficult work. Honor them, not because they are perfect, but because they have beautiful feet who walk and talk and take the good news of salvation to those who have never heard.

Rich Maurer
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¹ <http://seeleyfamily87.com/2014/09/06/with-two-answers-to-prayer-god-blesses-us/>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_and_awe#Iraq_War

³ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, p.15.