



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)**

Picture this scene in Heaven.

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10)*

In this passage, John pulled back the veil of heaven to show us, not only the majesty of God, but of the reach of his gospel. There will be men and women from every nation, tribe people and language. Can you see the variety in this worship scene? Do you see that every skin tone is represented here, from the darkest to the lightest. Every facial type, every shape of nose, every angle and size of eyes and ears. Every shade of hair color imaginable. Everything that distinguishes people physically throughout the world will be present in the people surrounding his throne. It will be the most beautiful rainbow of people you have ever seen surrounding the

throne of God in pure--I mean pure worship. Can you see it? On a good day, can you almost taste this goodness?

But whatever you do, don't get stuck merely on the variety of skin colors. After all, we are all the same blood, aren't we? Everyone one of us are descendants of Adam. Every person on the planet can trace their genetic roots to one of Noah's three sons. We are the same. Yet we are different and spread out over the globe. There will be people from every nation, tribe, people and language. Today there are 196 nations in the world. **SCOTLAND** But it's not just nations that will be represented. Every tribe people and language will also be worshipping there. The missions experts tell us that there are 11,236 distinct people groups today.

Here's the definition of a 'people group.'

A "people group" is an ethnolinguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members. There are two parts to that word: ethno and linguistic. Language is a primary and dominant identifying factor of a people group.<sup>1</sup>

So there are 11,236 distinct people groups in the world and every one of them will be represented in Heaven. You know, it doesn't matter if that 11,236 number is right on or not. Maybe there will only 10,000, maybe there are 14,000, but the point is, there are thousands of them. We understand that this doesn't mean that every person will be in heaven but some people from every people group--tribe, nation, people and language--will be there. Do you understand that this is a promise? This is a promise as certain as any promise in all of Scripture. It's not a goal, a vision or a mission statement. It's a promise.

We are really good at creating mission statements. In fact, our denomination just changed their mission statement. For the longest time, it read like this.

*The EFCA exists to glorify God by multiplying healthy churches among all people.*

I've always liked this mission statement. Obviously, every Christian mission statement wants to bring glory to God, but the key is how they plan to fulfill this. It is the goal of our 1400 U.S. churches and missions centers around the globe to do three things.

1. They want to multiply churches. They don't want to just add churches one or two at a time. They want churches who bring about more churches by multiplication. This may not be happening in the US, but it is happening in some parts of the world.
2. They want to multiply healthy churches. You can gather a crowd and call it a church if you pour enough money and resources into it. If you drive down a block in the inner city, you will see countless storefront churches with all kinds of crazy names. Anyone can start a church but we want to multiply *healthy* churches. Many of you have firsthand experience in how an unhealthy church can do more damage than no church at all. We want healthy churches.
3. They want to multiply healthy churches among all people. We are meant to read "people groups" there. It's not realistic to think that our denomination will reach all 11,236 people groups

in the world is it? But the intention and the plan is to make as big a dent as possible. and to cooperate with other ministries and movements doing the same thing.

But just recently, the EFCA made a very slight change.

*The EFCA exists to glorify God by multiplying transformational churches among all people*

You can see that they substituted the word *healthy* for the word *transformational*. I showed this to one person and they thought that word was too new-agey for them. Don't think new age. Think Romans 12. *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...* The Holy Spirit is all about transformation. He is the author and power behind all personal transformation. You can debate about the word change, but personally, I think it was a great choice

Mission statements are supposed to guide you in your mission, right? Do you happen to know Google's corporate motto? Since its inception, their motto has been "Don't be evil." First of all, it's not very exciting and second, I don't think they follow their own motto. Listen to what one media pundit had to say.

When they put that policy in place, they didn't realize what they had done. They didn't understand the difference between good and evil," Enderle said.

"I think they should change their slogan to 'evil are us.' It seems like every time you turn around they are doing something that is at best questionable and at worst anti-people."<sup>2</sup>

Were you aware that if you assign a number to each letter of the alphabet and then assign these numbers to the name Google, that it adds up to the number 666? No, I'm totally kidding but you can go ahead and start the rumor if you want and we'll see if it catches on. ;-)

Now let me tell you what this has to do with the scene in Heaven from Revelation 7 and our text in Romans 10. I love the missions statement of the EFCA but it is not a promise, is it? Glorifying God my multiplying transformational churches is a statement of our preferred future. That's what mission statements are. We identify what we are supposed to be all about and then create a statement that encapsulates what we should be doing. Our mission statement is good, but it's not a promise. Even if we gave every last dime in dedication to this mission statement, we could never guarantee that it would come to pass. At the end of the day, the leaders of our denomination in Minneapolis, every pastor in its pulpit and every person in the pew are just a bunch of sinful human beings trying to do God's will. We can work really, really hard at glorifying God my multiplying transformational churches, but we can't guarantee it.

But what John wrote in Revelation 7 is not a mission statement. It is a promise. *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.* This will come to pass. There will be people from every nation, tribe, people and language gathered in eternal worship of Jesus Christ. The gospel will go to and be received by people group in every corner of the globe. We should take great comfort in this knowledge.

So, on the one hand, we have this perfect promise in Revelation about the spread of the gospel to every nation tribe, people and language. But on the other hand, we have this truth found in Romans 10:14. *And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?* How do we hold these two truths together? The gospel will be spread to every corner of the globe but as far as we can tell, over half of these 11,000 people groups have yet to hear the gospel? This raises another common question that many people have--do they need to hear? Is it absolutely necessary for these people to hear the good news of salvation in Christ in order to be saved?

Let me remind you of our the principles that we are building upon and then answer these important questions.

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."*
6. **Proclaim to the nations**-*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*
7. **Proclaim out of your worship**- *who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isa. 52)*  
And this morning's principle...
8. **Proclaim because God has promised success**- *every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*

God has promised success but he has also ordained the means to this success--the preaching and hearing of the gospel. I can't think of anywhere in Scripture where it is more clear than in this passage.

*For "everyone who **calls** on the name of the Lord will be saved."*  
*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**?*  
*And how are they to **preach** unless they are **sent**?*

Notice how Paul strung these phrases together like links in an iron chain. He repeats a key word in the a phrase to the next phrase. Call and call. Believe/believe, heard/hear, preaching/preach, and then finally the key word sent. In no way can this chain of events be separated. each one is dependent upon the one that came before.

However, to understand it in the correct sequence of time, we actually need to take these key words and work backwards. Paul has call, believe, hear, preach and sent, but the actual order of events would be SENT-PREACH-HEAR-BELIEVE (FAITH)-CALL. If you are a believer, this is exactly how you got saved. No steps were skipped because no steps can be skipped. If you were five years old or fifty years old when you got saved, this is the process that you went through.

First, someone was sent to you. Maybe it was your mom. Maybe it was your pastor, or just a kid at school. But they came to you. They probably did not cross an ocean or learn a new language to be sent to you, but they were sent nonetheless.

The next thing they did was preach to you. Do you remember that sermon? For most of you it was probably a conversation. In fact, I wish they didn't even use the word "preach" right here. When you hear this word preach or preaching, what immediately comes to mind? What I am doing right now, correct? Or at least what I *attempt* to do each Sunday! The word preaching might also make you think of street preaching or the preacher of the church where you grew up, but almost 100% of the time, you will think of some kind of preacher preaching some kind of sermon.

In the New Testament, it certainly does mean "to preach" in a crowd of people, but look back at verse eight. *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim.* This is the word we have been talking about for the past six weeks--**proclamation**. Did you once, in all six weeks, think primarily in terms of formal preaching as we have been talking about proclamation? As we have worked through these eight principles, did you consider substituting the word preach for the word proclaim?

1. Preach on your knees.
2. Preach out of your heart's desire.
3. Preach with clarity.
4. Preach with the need for submission.
5. Preach from history.
6. Preach to the nations.
7. Preach out of your worship.
8. Preach because God has promised success.

All preaching is a type of proclamation, but not all proclamation is preaching. Do you see the significance of this? This means that in the five steps to salvation, SENT-PREACH-HEAR-BELIEVE (FAITH)-CALL, the person whom we call the preacher isn't the only one doing the proclaiming. You are the proclaimer. But you know what it also means? Back up one word from preach--SENT. This means if you are the proclaimer you are also the "sent one." "But where am I supposed to go"? you might be thinking. "I have never felt called to the mission field. That seems like too much to me."

Listen. God may or may not call you to a foreign mission field to reach one of the 6000 unreached people groups. It is most definitely his will and his plan that someone go to these people, and maybe it will be someone in this room. But whether you go or whether you stay, you are sent. You are sent to proclaim. You are sent to proclaim the word of faith. You are sent to proclaim the good news of salvation by faith alone and grace alone in Christ alone. You are sent. You!

"But what if they don't listen?" That's our number one fear, isn't it? What if they reject our message and they reject us? Paul has an answer for that. *16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"*

Do you remember Isaiah's famous call to the ministry? *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."* (Isaiah 6:8) There's that word send again. Isaiah was sent. You are sent. he gladly took up the mantle of being sent forth by the Lord. But later in chapter 53 Isaiah asked the Lord an important question. *"Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"* He was sent but the people did not listen. That was almost the essence of what it meant to be a prophet. It sometimes it can be the essence of what it means to be sent as a proclaimer of the good news.

Notice also that Paul linked not believing with the sin of disobedience. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"* The fact that they have not obeyed the gospel is the same thing as not believing the gospel. Therefore, belief is disobedience. Belief is more than just making a choice to believe or not believe. If I go to Culvers, I can choose between a butter burger and a cod sandwich. Both choices are essentially neutral (though I definitely prefer the cod sandwich!). Choosing one over the other is not a sin issue. But choosing unbelief instead of belief is a sin issue. It's not just an absence of belief, it is defiant disobedience.

Let me summarize some final principles.

**1. We must go.** If a person cannot hear the gospel, believe the gospel and call on the name of the Lord unless someone is sent to proclaim the truth to them, they cannot be saved. Remember that there is an unbroken chain between these five steps: SENT-PREACH-HEAR-BELIEVE (FAITH)-CALL. We must go. Therefore, to whom are you sent? To whom will you proclaim the truth?

**2. We must go whether others believe or not.** Does God care about the results of our proclamation? Does he care whether or not people believe the good news? Of course he does. But he doesn't promise us success. he does not guarantee that people will listen to us. Did you listen and believe the first time you heard the gospel? He has not promised us immediate success but as we have already seen, he has promised us ultimate success.

**3. We must go because God has ordained the end (all nations will be saved) and the means (the faithful proclamation of the gospel.)** So this is how you resolve my original question between God's promise of ultimate success and the absolute need to take the gospel to those who have never heard. God will have his way. he has ordained that people from all nations, tribes, peoples and languages will be saved. But he has also ordained the faithful proclamation of the gospel. *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* You must hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved. So with all of that in mind, here are some closing questions.

- How will you go?
- When will you go?
- Where will you go?
- Are you prepared, prayed and empowered to go?

Rich Maurer

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.peoplegroups.org/understand/313.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cNBC.com/id/101923422#>.