

Hearing that hardens and humbles

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[0 : 0 0] Let me turn, if you would, to that passage that we read in Romans chapter 10. Verse 13 of Romans 10, where we ended last time, is a verse that declares the marvelous universality of the gospel.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, north, south, east and west, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

But how then can so many Jews, indeed the bulk of the people of Israel, how then can they not be saved?

Chapter 9, verse 31 reminds us that they of all people had God's word. They had his law that would lead to righteousness and yet they did not attain it.

Why? Verse 32 says, because they did not pursue it by faith. That is, by faith, receiving humbly God's gracious and sovereign mercy for their sins.

[1 : 3 0] But then if God is sovereign in salvation, as he certainly is, Paul says in chapter 9, verse 11, it's all according to his call. And in verse 15 of chapter 9, it's all according to God's mercy.

Then if God is sovereign in salvation like that, is there failure to believe then God's fault? Well, not at all, says Paul emphatically here in chapter 10.

God's sovereignty does not mean for one moment that we are not responsible for our response to him. Quite the reverse. It's precisely because God is the sovereign Lord of all that all are bound to bow the knee to his lordship.

That all are bound to pursue righteousness his way and no other way. He is sovereign. He commands his way. But that is precisely what many people will not do.

So many people, especially religious people like Israel, will not submit to that way of being right with God. They want to do it their way. They want to seek their own and establish their own righteousness.

[2 : 5 3] Whether by asserting their background or their good works or their moral or cultural superiority. Whatever way it is. Their own righteousness. But you see, that is simply blatant rejection and disobedience to a sovereign command of God.

It's willful. It's culpable rebellion against the one who is Lord of all. It's the unforgivable sin. In fact, it's the only unforgivable sin.

Because it's refusal of God's forgiveness and his mercy. Which can be found no other way but in Jesus Christ. You can't be forgiven unless you receive the forgiveness that is offered to you, can you?

And you won't receive forgiveness unless you accept that you need forgiveness. And you know that you can only receive forgiveness humbly from the one that you've wronged.

So only a humbled heart can receive forgiveness. Not a hardened heart. Only one who knows that they need grace can love grace.

[4 : 04] Otherwise, otherwise grace enrages the human heart. And that's the way it was with Israel. They rejected God's grace in the person of Christ, who was the heart, the very heart of the law of Moses.

As they had rejected God's grace in the promise of Christ, who had always, always been the hope of that law of faith. We saw that last time. And so also, in Romans 10 verse 14 to the end, Paul shows us how Israel in the main still was rejecting God's grace in the preaching of Christ.

Which even now was reaping the harvest of salvation throughout all the world that the law of Moses itself, way back all those years ago, had promised right from the beginning.

God's word has not failed. Indeed, it's doing even now, says Paul, it's promised work as it's being heard all over the world. And God's sovereign purpose of salvation is being brought to completion.

Because it's as the gospel is proclaimed to all the world, that it is both hardening the hearts of those who don't believe, yes, but also humbling the hearts of many, many who are believing.

[5 : 30] So that through this mysterious sovereign work of God's Spirit, He may have mercy on all, all that He has called to be His people forever.

Both the fullness of the Gentiles all over the world, and all Israel will be saved through the same gospel mercy that is for all who believe.

That's what Paul's telling us in these chapters. For it's God's sovereign purpose, it's the command of the eternal God, as the very end of Romans 16 puts it, that all who God sovereignly calls to the obedience of faith shall be called through the gospel, through the preaching of Jesus Christ.

And that's what Paul focuses on here in the second half of Romans chapter 10. It's the mystery, it's the marvel of the preaching and the hearing that both hardens, yes, but also humbles the human heart.

I want to summarize Paul's argument here with four statements. If people are to call on the name of the Lord and be saved, then first Paul says, Christ's sovereign word must be heard.

[6 : 48] And indeed Paul tells us, it is being heard everywhere. And above all, it has been heard by Israel and the Jews. Look at verses 13 and 14.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how are they to call on him whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard?

Who's the they that Paul is speaking about in these verses? Well, the focus in verses 12 and 13 is very clearly on all people, on Jews and Gentiles, on everyone who calls on the name of the Lord.

So, I take it that he's talking here about how all people come to saving faith. But at the same time, the chief focus of this chapter, in fact the whole passage here in chapters 9 to 11, is the problem of Israel's particular refusal of God's righteousness.

So, what Paul's saying here must clearly and predominantly apply, above all, to the Jews who had heard so much for so long, all through their history. But notice carefully what Paul says.

[8 : 07] Calling on the Lord for salvation is the expression of real faith. And real faith, he says, comes through hearing the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Look at verse 14. Now cross out in your Bibles the of, where it says there, of whom they have never heard. The footnote in our Bible is quite correct.

Where you see it says, whom they have never heard. Paul is saying that you can't believe, you can't call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, unless you have heard his voice personally calling you.

It's not hearing about Jesus. It's hearing Jesus himself. It wasn't hearing about Jesus that caused the crippled man in John chapter 5 to spring back to fullness of life, was it?

It was hearing the voice, the command of the Lord Jesus himself. And Jesus went on to say, do you remember in that very chapter, the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

[9 : 16] So the saving power of the kingdom of heaven comes as he himself comes, Christ comes, to call people into newness of life.

Christ comes himself. He comes clothed with his promises of grace and mercy, as the reformers used to like to say it. He draws near to encounter human beings personally, to confront them personally with his mercy.

That's what Paul's saying. But how? How do people hear him? Well, they hear him, says Paul, as he himself speaks through the human preaching of the gospel.

End of verse 14. How will they hear without someone preaching, without someone proclaiming the message to them? When the truth of the gospel is proclaimed, he's saying, when it's heralded by the king's people, the king himself is encountered.

Lord Jesus, we meet you in your word. The voice of Christ is heard clearly himself, just as if Jesus himself stood in the flesh in front of you and spoke to you.

[10 : 34] Paul says the very same thing in Ephesians chapter 2, where he's speaking to them, and he says, he, Christ, came and preached peace to you who were near, and peace to those who were far off.

And he's speaking about when he himself and the other apostles came and preached to them. He's saying, when we did that, Christ came, and he spoke to you himself. You need to think about that for a minute to realize that if that wasn't true, then salvation, spiritual rebirth, would be something that we ourselves could produce.

We could argue people, we could convince people by our mere words into life. That's impossible. It's preposterous. Only God can call the dead to life.

But he draws near through the mouth and the tongues of mere human beings. And of course, Israel above all had had the privilege of the word of Christ near to them.

Chapter 9, remember, to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the law, the promises. Way back in Moses' day, the word of life, says Paul, was near them in verse 8 of chapter 10.

[11 : 49] It was available in their mouth and their hearts so that they could believe. Christ himself came to them in the preaching of Moses. And he said, choose life.

So in Deuteronomy 30, in that last great sermon of his, Moses is urging the people, love him, obey him, hold fast to him, for he is your life.

And in a remarkable parallel, just almost the next chapter, he says, this is no empty word for you. This word is your very life. He who is your life has come to you in the word of life through the heralds that God himself has sent.

And send heralds God most certainly did to Israel in abundance. Moses, but also all the prophets, as verse 15 of chapter 10, testifies, quoting Isaiah chapter 52, the beautiful feet of those who preach the good news, the gospel to Zion.

And at last, of course, the Messiah himself, the Lord Jesus, came and spoke directly to them. They stumbled over him as a stumbling stone.

[13 : 02] But even then, God had not given up. Again, he sent heralds, the apostles, literally, the sent ones. He sent them with the good news of salvation.

To whom? To the Jew first. To every synagogue in the ancient world. Christ's sovereign word must be heard.

Because as verse 17 sums it up, faith comes, says Paul, from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ, the living word whom we meet, in whom we meet, rather, the living Christ himself.

So God is not at fault. He sent preachers all through the ages to Israel and now, at the very ends of the earth, he has sent them everywhere, verse 18.

No one can possibly say they haven't heard. Their voice has gone out to all the earth, their words, to the very ends of the earth. Now, Paul, of course, isn't saying that every person and nation had been evangelized by then.

[14 : 10] Of course not. He himself was on his way to Spain and other un-evangelized lands. It's just like in Colossians chapter 1 where he uses similar language. He says, this gospel is being proclaimed today all over the world.

He's simply saying that if Gentiles, pagans even, all over the world have heard the truth of the gospel, then Israel, Israel with all her added privileges, cannot possibly be ignorant in such a way as to have any excuse, none at all.

verse 18, he's quoting from Psalm 19 where the focus is on God's word, his law, where all true and ultimate revelation comes from.

And Israel's privilege was to have that law. He's saying, not only has God given light to all the earth, God has given the privilege of divine light above all to Israel, both in the law and now also in the apostolic preaching.

preaching. So then, how can Israel, who has heard the message so clearly, how can Israel not have called upon the Lord Jesus for salvation if faith comes from hearing?

[15 : 28] Well, it's the second thing. Paul says, it's not enough that Christ's sovereign word is merely heard. Christ's sovereign word must be obeyed.

It must be heard with what Paul in Galatians 3, verse 2 and verse 5 calls the hearing of faith. That's what he's implying here.

But in fact, Paul says, far too often, Christ's word has been heard not with the hearing of faith, but with the hearing of unbelief. And above all, that's happened among the Israelites.

Christ's word, he says, has been disobeyed, verse 16. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. Well, not all who hear the gospel do obey the gospel, whether they're Jew or Gentile or whoever they are.

But again, Paul must be thinking especially of the reaction of the Jews who constantly heard the gospel from God's prophets. But even the prophets cried out like Isaiah here in the second half of verse 16.

[16 : 37] Lord, they don't believe it when we preach this word to them. Look at verse 16 very closely. Do you see that not to obey is not to believe?

Isn't that how Charles Cranfield, the commentator, puts it? To obey the gospel is to believe it and to believe in him who is its content. And to believe the gospel and believe in Christ involves obeying it and obeying him.

That's absolutely right. That is why Paul in this letter calls it the obedience of faith. Just as Jesus constantly taught that way. It's not the one who hears my word but the one who hears them and does them.

He says in Matthew 7 he's like the man who built his house upon the rock that will stand in the judgment not collapse. That's what Moses said in the law just exactly the same.

Look back to verse 5 of chapter 10. It's the doer of the word who will live not just the empty hearer. That is it's the one who hears in his heart.

[17 : 48] That's Paul's constant refrain here in these verses isn't it? It's real heart belief that saves. It's real heart obedience. So in verse 8 and verse 9 and verse 10 it's all about the heart.

Believe in your heart and you'll be saved. But that is what they just would not do. Look back to verses 3 and 4 again.

They would not submit their hearts to God's righteousness in Christ but instead they insisted on establishing their own. I can do it. I'll do it my way.

That's the persistent cry of the human heart isn't it? And again Paul is insistent upon where the fault lies and it's not in God. It's not in God's gospel.

He has not left people without opportunity to call on him. Least of all has he left the Jews without opportunity to call on him. So verse 19 again they can't possibly claim ignorance as an excuse can they?

[18 : 58] This message has gone out into all the world then verse 19 is it conceivable that Israel couldn't understand literally did not know. Well of course it's not.

Again he drives it home. They first had Moses verse 19 and then they had the prophets too verse 20 and 21 not only to proclaim God's word but to warn them clearly of the consequences of refusing that word.

So Moses warned them way back in Deuteronomy chapter 32 that's where verse 19 comes from. He warned them that pagans complete pagans would usurp their place because of their rebellion.

And then Isaiah again verse 20 astonishingly boldly said to them that God God will find for himself complete outsiders to be his people while you reject him while his own people reject him despite his amazing patience holding out his hands day after day after day their ignorance their failure to hear is absolutely culpable in every way says Paul they have heard yes with their ears ears but not with a hearing that has humbled their hearts only with what it seems that has hardened their hearts did Israel not know of course of course they knew but they suppressed the truth they refused to really know in their hearts and that was the story of Israel all the way through wasn't it do you remember Stephen in Acts chapter 7 how he summed up his sermon let me sum up your whole story he said to the

Israelites you stiff necked people uncircumcised in heart and ears you always reject the Holy Spirit just as your fathers did so do you see it's the heart the heart is the seat of the world the control center of our life it's the heart that in the Bible is the true organ of hearing not just the ears turn with me back to Matthew chapter 13 just to see very clearly the Lord Jesus and what he said about this quoting the prophets quoting Isaiah page 818 in the church Bibles Matthew 13 at verse 13 very important this is why I speak to them in parables said Jesus not because homely illustrations help things but because they discriminate he says because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear nor do they understand indeed in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says you will indeed hear but never understand you will indeed see but never perceive for this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear their eyes they've closed lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I would hear them hearing yes but they do not hear nor do they understand with their hearts so that they can be saved

[22 : 25] Paul quotes that same word from Isaiah at the end of the book of Acts the very last couple of verses and then says to the people the Jews therefore know that this salvation will be sent to the Gentiles and they will listen and turn in their hearts and be saved but why why do so many not only Jews but Gentiles too why do they reject this beautiful beautiful good news why would they not hear and believe what they've heard from us well you see the clue also is there in verse 16 in that very quotation which comes from Isaiah chapter 53 in verse 1 because what the people couldn't stomach then in Isaiah's day or in Paul's day or even today is exactly what Isaiah was expounding in Isaiah chapter 53 and that verse that came in the middle of the song that we sang there was about a messiah king wasn't it who wasn't strong but who was despised and disfigured who was a suffering servant who was weak and who became like a sheep to the slaughter that through his suffering alone many would be saved only through his suffering and death said Isaiah would the many be counted righteous put right with God you see to believe

Isaiah's words or Paul's words or Jesus words the words of the gospel to believe these words is to submit to a way of acceptance with God that comes only only through the cross of Christ it's to fall into the dust isn't it it's to plead your absolute need for grace and for mercy from God it's to sing with real conviction in your heart the words of the hymn nothing in my hand I bring simply to your cross I cling naked come to you for dress helpless look to you for grace stained by sin to you I cry help me wash me Savior or I die and you see that is so so humbling it's deeply offensive to everything in the human heart isn't it sheer folly to the self sufficient pagan to the modern day seculars and it's a stumbling block of offense to the self righteous Jew or to any religious person who feels that they can do it their way and that they're alright with

God people will not submit to that to God's righteousness which is in Christ alone where I and everything I am and do is nothing but he alone is everything from start to finish I won't have that people say I will establish my own righteousness so the staunch Roman Catholic as somebody was just telling me this week will say to you how dare you to be so arrogant as to say that you can have salvation by faith alone because that's to say to me that all my religious faithfulness is of no value what a cheek I won't have you say that I won't have that I'm a faithful one that must mean something with God well the secularist says well I don't even believe in God but if there were a God how dare you suggest I wouldn't be good enough for him I'm a lot better than most that I'm probably better than you or the moral person who says well I don't need that

I'm good enough I'm better than most I submit to Jesus obey Jesus and everything no no no there's no need to get that serious it's my life I'll live it my way I give to charity I go to church sometimes that's what matters what does it matter what I do with my money what does it matter what I do with my sex life what does it matter about anything else how dare you tell me that I've got to live my life that way under Jesus you see that's why not all have believed the gospel because believing means obeying it means submitting to the lordship of Jesus Christ in everything it's real heart belief expressed in a life of confession belief that obeys that's the faith that saves as we see talking to a friend who's a Cambridge don a churchy sort of person

I'm not sure where he stands he says he believes but he has issues and one of his issues is that he says I can't understand why so many intelligent colleagues of mine don't believe the Christian message if it is as you say so true so reasonable I said to him that it's not an intellectual issue the real blockage to faith in human beings is never in the head it's in the heart it's a moral issue it's a spiritual issue because it's an issue of submission it's not a lack in IQ intelligence quotient it's a lack in desire for OQ obedience quotient that's what stops people following the Lord Jesus because intelligent people will look at it and say well if that really is true look what it will mean for my life submission obedience to the Lord Jesus and everything and many a person you see when they begin to grasp that when they hear with their ears and they begin perhaps to start hearing with their hearts they pull back and they say like that former chief of BP

[28 : 48] I want my life back isn't that right maybe that's you maybe you've heard the message of Christ all your life you've known it all you understood only too well what it really means to believe to submit to Jesus to obey Jesus now you've resisted you want your life back at least for a time maybe you're pretending to yourself that everything's fine I'm a lot better than most I'm still on the roll at St.

George's Tron everything will be alright friends be very very careful you stop being humbled by the hearing of the gospel then you will become more and more hardened by it don't let verse 21 be true of you contrary disobedient trying patience of God Christ's sovereign word must be obeyed but not all have obeyed the gospel many privileged Jews in Paul's day and ever since and many privileged people in Christendom ever since also many in fact most in Scotland today have not obeyed the gospel of Christ despite centuries of privilege that we have had in this nation nonetheless thirdly

Paul is just as clear Christ's sovereign word has been heard and is bearing fruit and that is so everywhere today he says and above all among the pagan gentile nations but also among the Jews everywhere there is a remnant chosen by grace believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and though verses 19 to 21 are painful and perplexing to Paul and indeed to us at the same time they bear witness don't they to the indisputable fact that God's sovereign purpose is being fulfilled exactly according to plan it's all there in the Old Testament says Paul Moses himself foresaw it and spoke about it even before Israel had entered the promised land he said to them that their rejection of God's way of righteousness would lead would be the very thing that leads to an overflow of God's grace that will mean riches for the world the pagan world the gentile world all nations as promised to Abraham and that in turn

Israel's jealousy of gentile salvation is what will bring to completion God's ultimate purpose for Israel also until as he says in chapter 11 verse 26 all Israel will be saved and whatever exactly that means and we'll have to come to that it's a very definite statement God knows what he's doing and however extraordinary we find that pattern to be and I mean it does seem extraordinary to us doesn't it why should God do things this way I don't know and Paul doesn't tell us either does he he says at the end of chapter 11 his ways are inscrutable but it does humble us that's for sure chapter 11 verse 32 says all including the most privileged including Israel all are consigned to disobedience that he might have mercy on all so that no one no one in this world could ever ever boast but could only marvel at the mercy of our God but however unsearchable however inscrutable it all is it does give wonderful reassurance to us that God has planned and is using even what seems to be the most dreadful rejection of his gospel to further his purpose of grace and mercy for the world and yes insiders

Jews will be saved through envy says verse 19 as they see their heritage going to others and verse 20 and 21 total pagan outsiders will also be saved by sheer mercy and that's always been God's plan his word is bearing fruit according to plan all over the world as the gospel of Jesus Christ is heard and friends do you see what that means it means we can never despair neither rejection or disobedience to God from those who know the truth and have known it nor at the apparent disinterest from many who have no knowledge of the truth at all none are beyond the pale none are beyond God's grace and mercy God is patient amazingly so he says in verse 21 to those he is blessed with privileges of grace all day long he holds out his hands he's patient and he's profligate in his grace to the complete outsider the pagan the enemy the god hater the worst of men he'll be found he says by those who are not seeking he'll show himself to those who are not asking to be found by God none is beyond the pale and that means none is beyond our prayers he's patient he's patient with a beloved child of yours who grew up surrounded by the grace of the gospel of Christ but now is away in the far country contrary and disobedient he's waiting looking with longing like the father of the lost son waiting patiently longing to kill the fatted calf and rejoice in bringing such home complete outsiders can be brought in how much more says Paul can he graft back in natural branches who've had this all their life and others like that who become hardened and become distanced not least the Jewish people one of the key reasons that Paul writes Romans is that the largely Gentile church in Rome should see that evangelizing Jews must be a part of the church's life and so it should be still we'll do more of that next time but whatever difficulties

[35 : 47] Romans chapter 11 presents to us one message is loud and clear isn't it God still has a great interest in the Jewish people and so must we the gospel is still to the Jew first and God is patient he holds out his hands with longing to those who have wandered away and he is profligate towards even the most ignorant and arrogant outsider do you sometimes think I can't possibly pray for him surely he could never be saved surely she is absolutely beyond possibility don't you think that sometimes maybe the hopeless alcoholic or drug addict or marriage wrecker or sex offender or the nightmare personality or the ardent atheist or the out and out hedonist or whoever it is who seems most unlikely ever to be saved but verse 20 and 21 tells us that God loves just such people and he does reach out and he commands faith into their hearts and draws them to him even though they're not looking for him because he's merciful he's kind he's wonderful and so we can pray we must pray like Paul for our insider loved ones they might yet be saved and we must pray for the shocking surprises of the total outsiders the most unlikely people that God grabs by his grace and we're hearing on Wednesday night at our annual meeting of two folk recently who came to faith in Christ here weren't looking for anything well one of them was looking for a toilet and the other one was just looking for somewhere to sit down when they're doing their shopping and they came through these doors and they found or were found by the grace and mercy of the

Lord Jesus Christ Christ's word is being heard and it's bearing fruit and will go on bearing fruit all over the world and right here and so we must pray and we can pray because he is using even rejection and disobedience to magnify his grace to many who are being saved and so we're praying in line with God's sovereign plan and purpose in doing his saving work his way if these are the things that we're praying for but that does not mean that we're passive that we must just wait for God to do all these things or that we must even just merely be praying that God will be at work no finally perhaps above all in this passage Paul is saying Christ's sovereign word must therefore be proclaimed everywhere to everyone to Jew and Gentile to insider and outsider just because he is patient in his grace to insiders and just because he is profligate in his grace to outsiders and the grace of

God comes to the hearts of men and women and gives that saving faith through the proclamation of the gospel faith comes from hearing and hearing is heard through the word of Christ Christ there's a certain attitude that people sometimes have that says well it's all of God and so we must pray pray for revival pray for God to render heavens and come down that's our work let God do the rest no says Paul in Romans 10 that is not our only work look at verse 14 again and 15 how are they to hear without someone preaching and how are they to preach unless they're sent as it's written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news the very last paragraph of Romans 16 Paul makes clear as I've said that the great mystery that's been kept secret for long ages is that

God's purpose of salvation will be complete and come to its fulfillment through the gospel through the preaching of Jesus Christ it says the same in Ephesians chapter 3 it's through the gospel that God's plan is coming to fulfillment God is fulfilling all his purposes of sovereign grace but we we are to be at the heart of how that happens by our feet taking the gospel to the ends of the earth he's called us so that our feet should share this wonderful good news of Christ and his salvation Christ's sovereign word must be proclaimed says Paul and there's nothing more beautiful to God than our footsteps when we go out of the gospel of Christ to be shared friends if we miss that we've missed everything about what

Paul is writing in these chapters in Romans he is passionate for prayer yes for those who are outside Christ but he's passionate also for proclaiming the gospel to Jew and Gentile and he's urging the church in Rome to be engaged in it with him praying for him but also paying for him and sending him that that might happen and that's why this letter to the Romans is in our Bibles yes we are to pray urgently for many that they might be saved pray for salvation but we are also to proclaim to share the gospel far and wide so that Christ's voice is heard because that is God's sovereignly appointed way of bringing his people to salvation let me quote to you from Dick Lucas these chapters were not written in order that a theological student might write a thesis and get a degree on a post as a lecturer or write a commentary on

[41 : 52] Romans they should burden his heart for evangelism we must declare war says Dick on all theological research which just goes round and round in circles and doesn't lead to a passion for evangelizing not only Jews but also the whole world Romans is not in our Bible for sterile theological controversy it's there to send us out into the world in evangelism not all have obeyed the gospel yet and yes there is a hearing that hardens and we must all be warned how serious that is to hear in that way but there is also a glorious hearing of faith the humble hearing of the word of Christ that is the call of Christ to those who will then call on him and find salvation it's the great paradox of grace that those who are humbled by that grace are not put to shame says Paul will never be put to shame but be exalted and receive riches of God's grace the way of surrender to

Jesus is the very opposite of the way of shame whoever believes in him will not be put to shame but first he must call on them how are they to call on him whom they have not believed in and how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching so let us pray yes for salvation many may hear him and know him and also as Jesus urged us let's pray for sending for beautiful feet of many laborers into the harvest field to preach the good news but friends let us also proclaim here and outside the door and all over Glasgow and in our homes and in our families and in our schools and universities and to the very ends of the earth proclaim the good news as Isaiah did news of happiness of salvation of the comfort of our God who is the redeemer of his people let's proclaim it that the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God not all have obeyed and there is great perplexity and often there is great pain and we don't fathom his ways do we but what we do know and what

Paul tells us here plainly and clearly is that his grace is patient all day long he holds out his hand even to the stubborn the disobedient the contrary and his grace is profligate he will be found even by those who are not seeking not asking not caring and we do know that everyone everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved that everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will not be put to shame these things we know so we can say hallelujah our God reigns let's pray Lord your ways are beyond us and above all that we can think or imagine that even the worst of human opposition and rebellion and hardness and sin in your hands can become a fountain of grace and mercy so Lord fill us we pray with a desire to be those with beautiful feet who proclaim the good news that in Jesus Christ lifted high our God reigns and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame Amen