

“Why the Task is Urgent” //

Romans 10:14–17 // SENT, #2

Moving services

We’re in the 2nd week of SENT, and I am going to invite you to consider something very difficult this weekend, and that is the question of whether or not Jesus is the only way that people can find salvation and if so what that means for us...

There really is hardly anything that Christians believe that is more unpopular than this... This is the sticking point I’ve had in a majority of the conversations I’ve had about Christ, whether they took place on a college campus, on airplanes, in my office... even in the Waffle House.

- I’d stopped one day at the Waffle House to eat what I refer to as “the cuisine of the gods,” and I overheard this conversation taking place in the booth next to me between this guy and a waitress.
- I noticed they were talking about God, and I overheard this guy say, “Well, the problem is knowing what to believe about God. Everybody has a different position. How are you supposed to know which one is right?”
- Well, I’m sitting there, with my mouth full of hashbrowns, thinking, “You people are so in luck! I’m a certified expert on God! I mean, I have my MASTER of Divinity. (What a dumb name, “I have mastered the divine...”)”
- And I put my hand up, seriously, to set everyone straight... but before I could say anything the waitress says, “Yeah... you’re right... You know I hate? It’s them born-again types... When they come in here... whenever you start talking about God they just take over the conversation telling you why they are right and you are wrong. They don’t care about you; they just care about shoving what they believe down your throat.” Then

she sees my hand and says, “Honey, can I help you?” And I was like, “Yeah... could I have some more tea?”

Or, I once had a conversation with a girl in an airport terminal...

- She was on her way up to Harvard and at the time I was a student at Campbell (so, you see, there was an immediate connection).
- I was explaining to her why I had given my life to Jesus and she just thought that was awesome... She said, ‘Clearly, that gives you direction. I envy that.’
- So, I said... “You know, you could have this too.”
- I remember that she was really good-looking and at the time, and I wasn’t married, so I was thinking, “Maybe I’ll lead her to Christ, and then we’ll get married...” And since she is going to Harvard she’s going to make lots of money so I can, like, be an author or painter or songwriter or something.”
- So, I start explaining to her how she could come to Jesus and she said, ‘Yeah... I don’t know... it’s not really for me.’ And I said, ‘Well, sure it is. Jesus is not the Savior only of a few, He’s the only way.’
- She looked at me and said, ‘*You don’t really believe that.*’ And I said, ‘Well, sure I do. I mean, that’s what Jesus said.’ She said ‘No you don’t think that.’ Like she was trying to some Jedi mind-trick on me or something. And I said, “Well, of course I do.’ She said, ‘Nobody in our educated society could possibly be arrogant enough to believe that anymore.’

Our culture has no problem hearing us explain that we have found salvation in Jesus... It’s the idea that Jesus is the only Savior that they just won’t accept. This is the point where people often stumble...

- ***One of the reasons people is object because it seems like it would be unfair for God to declare Jesus is the only way if not everyone has heard about Jesus...***
 - It’s like you’ve got somebody who has never heard about Jesus, and the moment they die, God appears and yells “AHA! You didn’t receive Jesus!” And they say, “Jesus

Who?” And God says, “It’s too late now!”... and then He casts their souls into hell, and as they’re going down screaming “wait, wait” He says to them “Tough cookies...” in Latin...

- And we object because that seems arbitrary... Almost like if a dictator suddenly declared, “Everyone with spiky hair is condemned to prison.” How were you supposed to know you were breaking the law? It is unfair to be condemned for not knowing something you had no way to know.
- And that’s what the idea that there is salvation only in Jesus seems like...
- **People ask, “What about the innocent native in Africa who has never heard about God?** How could God hold him accountable for what he didn’t even know?” (1st of all, did you know that there are more Christians per capita in Africa than there are in the US, so, that’s not a great comparison... but, I get the point: **It doesn’t seem fair that God would hold someone accountable for what they don’t even know.**

So, because of these objections most people in America have developed what we could call a “functional universalism,” where they think that probably just about everybody, except for really bad people, will make it to heaven.

- A lot of well-meaning Christians will say, “You know, if you obey the good things in your religion that is, in a way, like obeying Christ... you are obeying the Christ elements in your religion so maybe God counts that.”
- Or, maybe there is a plan-B... an escape clause or something.
- Frankly, a lot of Christians just don’t think much about it... they say, “Well, I know what I believe but I won’t bother everybody else about it... in the end that is their business and... it will all work out.

I want to show you that Paul reaches a different conclusion, and that has dramatic implications for his life. I want to walk you through the steps he takes in Romans to get there.

Our missions pastor asked me to do this. He said, “Walk them through the 1st 10 chapters of Romans up to the place where Paul says, “This is why we go,” and show them how you got there.” So, I’m going to do that.

(I taught this stuff years ago...David Platt has something like this in a new book, *Radical*)

This has the potential to completely revolutionize your life, or for some of you, it may turn you off to Christianity. Probably both are going to happen this weekend. That’s what always happens when God’s word is clearly preached.

And I just want to tell you... honestly... this is very difficult for me... because it is so unpopular and the conclusions we come to are so, so weighty... But, listen, I’m just trying to take the Bible seriously. I’d love to be wrong, I really would, but I don’t see any way that I could be. I invite you to open your heart and just listen to the Word or God.

Paul’s logic in Romans moves in 6 steps:

Romans 1:18 is where we begin: **Romans 1:18–20 (ESV)** ¹⁸ “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them... so that they are without excuse.”

Logical step #1: 1. All people have heard about God

Paul says that God has shown Himself to people and made the truth about Himself plain to them. How?

Paul goes on in the next few verses to explain 2 ways that every human being everywhere has been made aware of God.

- First, the glory and beauty of creation teaches us that there is a Creator. There is a natural, innate sense of awe and wonder as we look at creation ... we look up and instinctively we know that we don't come from nowhere.
 - When you experience love and beauty and family and pain and death... when you look at the beauty of creation, you know that there is something more than just a biological accident...
 - When I look into the eyes of my wife I know I am not just looking at a biological machine... It's even different looking in her face than in the face of a pet... that's not just because she is smarter or more sophisticated... there is something in the human spirit that knows it was created for eternity.
- The 2nd thing Paul says in Romans 1 we know, innately, that there is a right and wrong. When your conscience tells you that something is wrong, and you feel wrong for doing it, it is telling you that there is a Lawgiver to which you're going to have to answer to.
 - When you go to our airport here at RDU, and you park your car there is a sign about every 3 feet that says, "Make you keep your parking ticket..." Make sure you keep your parking ticket... That's a strong indication that somebody, somewhere, is going to ask me for my parking ticket.
 - **Well, when your conscience tells you, "That is wrong,"** that is a strong indication that there is a Lawgiver to whom we are responsible and to whom, ultimately, you are going to answer.
- Obvious question: You say, "Well, what about atheists?" I'll explain this in a little bit, but atheism is an acquired belief, not an innate one. *That's why every culture in every part of the world ever discovered is religious in some way. People naturally believe in some kind of God to whom they will answer.*
- Two of my favorite stories illustrating this:
 - **Helen Keller:** "Miss Sullivan, in a most dedicated ministry of love, reached through the darkness and silence to the soul of that dear girl and brought her into the knowledge of man and the earth and all that man knows. Thus, Helen Keller became one of the greatest women of modern times. She recorded that there came a time when Miss Sullivan, being a very godly woman and a wonderful Christian, wanted to impart to her some truth about God. So Miss Sullivan went to Dr. Philip Brooks and asked him to come and tell Miss Keller about God. As Dr. Brooks sat there, he talked to Miss Sullivan, and she translated the words to Helen Keller through the finger pressures that she used for communication. As she got across the idea about God, suddenly a light broke out on Miss Keller's face, and she answered back in her way, "Oh, I know Him. I've known Him a long, long time. I just didn't know what to call Him." Even in the heart of someone who has no eyes to see, nor ears to hear – God has written Himself into the human heart.¹
 - ~~**Auca Indians.**~~ There was a remote tribe of Indians Ecuador that some missionaries got to... they were cannibals... many of them came to Christ, and, there was one guy from that tribe who, many years later, said, "I've noticed that many of you Westerners think that we ran around killing and eating people because we just didn't know better. That's not true. We always knew there was a deity of some kind, and that he was very displeased with what we were doing."

So, #1, all people have heard about God...

#2... Let me put this verse back up...

¹ <http://www.raystedman.org/romans1/0006.html>

Romans 1:18–19¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

- See that phrase: “*By their unrighteousness suppress the truth*”? The universal response to that revelation was to suppress it—we didn’t like it. We resented His glory and resisted His right to rule. Instead of giving God glory and the center place and submitting to His right to rule, we made ourselves the center, gave ourselves the glory, and obeyed our own rules.
- ...and so we suppressed the truth about God that was clear in our hearts.

2. All people have rejected God

- **Listen: (deep) That desire to suppress the truth about God manifests itself in 3 ways in Romans 1:**
 - a) **We disobeyed what we knew to be right (1:32; 2:12–13).** None of us, whether religious or not, lives up to our own standards of right and wrong (even if you’re not religious, you have a standard of right and wrong you probably don’t keep very well).
 - We know you should be loving and generous, but instead we’re selfish,
 - We know we should be courageous, but we are often timid and fearful
 - We know we should be truthful, but we are dishonest
 - We know we should be passionate, but we are apathetic
 - These are all ways we resist and kick back against the authority of God in our lives.
 - b) **We sought other things more than we sought God (1:21–25).** The glory and knowledge of the Creator God is not pre-eminent in our thoughts or our pursuits. If there is a God, then surely to know Him is life’s most important pursuit. But we, as a race, have been more preoccupied

with money, the approval of others, respect, sex, whatever, than we are with knowing and pleasing God.

- c) **Some of us turned to atheism (1:28).** Some people just decided to reject the idea of a glorious, all-powerful ruling being altogether. Here’s what is important to understand: That knowledge was not arrived at through a logical series of steps. No, that logic, that way of thinking, flowed out of our corrupt desires. One of the most important contributions of postmodern philosophy was to show us that there’s no such thing as cold, calculated logic... how we see usually facts is determined by our prejudices... our hearts color what we see. ***What we see is determined by what we love.***
 - Because we hate God’s rule, how He’s chosen to run the world, and because we resent His glory, our heads are able to be persuaded that he’s not even there.
- This is important to understand: Atheism is one of many fruits that springs out of our hatred of and resistance to God. And that spirit is not just present in atheists, it is the universal response of mankind to God. It’s *your* natural response, whether religious or not.

Paul’s conclusion about the whole world in chapter 3 is this:

Romans 3:10–11 (ESV)¹⁰ “*as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God... ²³ all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*”

- All people resist God’s rules and resent God’s centrality. Some do it within their system of religion; some do it by rejecting religion altogether, but the universal response is rejection of God.

3. All people are guilty before God

- Our suppression of the truth, Paul says, deserves “the wrath of God.”

- Now, that makes sense... right? If our hearts naturally hate God and reject His rule... then we deserve His wrath. I mean, think about it, if you put your fist in God's face and say, "No, God, I want to be God, you go to hell..." if we said that to the God of the universe, we'd deserve God's wrath.
- Paul says, "That's exactly what we've all done." We may have never uttered those words, but how we live says that to God. Choosing to obey your own rules and live for yourself is a rejection of God's authority and glory. And for that we stand condemned.
- Guys, sometimes we underestimate the wickedness of depravity... we talk about sin like the worst stuff is drugs or having sex with people we shouldn't or hurting others... those things are wrong, yes... but sin, at its core, is cosmic treason. In our hearts we resent God; we want to make the rules; we want to get glory; we'd rather murder Him and have Him out of the way and be God ourselves than submit to Him.
 - We talk like God is so wrong in letting bad things happen, or how we are amazed that he would dare punish us. What Paul finds amazing is that God would love and come after those who despised and rejected Him.

So, let me put these 1st 3 points together: **All people are guilty before God because all people have resisted the rule and glory of God evident in creation.**

- That means (pay attention to this): **we are all guilty, not because of what we haven't heard, but because of what we have heard and rejected.**
 - Did you get that? *What I'm trying to tell you is that the innocent native in Africa doesn't exist...All have rejected.*
 - **Question:** Would it be unfair if God condemned us for not hearing about Jesus? Of course... but that's not why we are condemned. We are condemned because we have rejected the rule of God.

- So, quick question I get sometimes, related to this: *What about babies or the mentally challenged? Are they guilty before God?*
 - Well, follow the logic... Why does the wrath of God? Because we suppress the truth. Well, where there is no knowledge of the truth, there can be no suppression.
 - **Romans 5:13, "Sin is not counted where there is no law."**
 - So, do babies or mentally challenged understand the law? No. Now, do they have hearts inclined to sin? Yes. But is their sin counted? According to Romans 5:13, no, because "sin is not counted where there is no law."
 - **Deut. 1:39...** When all of Israel sinned and was kept from the Promised Land, God said this about their children: **"As for your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there."**
 - **So, this doesn't apply to babies and children... but every adult, Paul concludes, has suppressed the truth about God, and is guilty of cosmic treason.**

#4: Romans 3:21–24 (ESV) ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law... ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... ²⁴ (we) are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."

4. God has made a way of salvation for all people

Four key words in those verses:

- **Gift:** God's salvation is not something that we, in any way, have earned. It's a gift.
 - Paul says it was apart from the law, which means our salvation was not given to us as a reward for how well we kept the law. It's a gift.
 - Now, to say "gift" is not to imply that it was free. A gift is free for the recipient, but it costs the giver. In this case, it cost Jesus His life.
 - That leads us to the 2nd word...

- **Redemption:** Jesus' gift to us was to pay the price of our sin in our place.
 - I've heard it said like this: It was as if the rightful wrath of God against our sin was pent up behind a dam 5 miles wide and 10 miles high, and suddenly that dam breaks open and a torrent of water rushes down upon us, but just before it overwhelms us, the ground in front of us opens up and swallows every bit of it...
 - **this was the cross of Jesus.** Jesus stood in our place and the full fury of the wrath of God was unleashed upon Him, and He absorbed every ounce of it in our place. He drank the cup of God's wrath to the dregs, turned it over, and said, "It is finished."
- **Grace:** Undeserved.
 - When we talk about fair, what we ought to realize is that what is fair is that each of us suffer the penalty for our sin. Grace is undeserved, unearned kindness. What is amazing is not God's judgment of us, but His kindness to us in the cross of Jesus.
- **Believe:** The way we receive the gift is simply to believe it.
 - Our part of the gift is just to believe. I've described it before like waking up in an ambulance...

Gift. Redemption. Grace. Believe. Salvation is a gift Jesus offers, in His love, to all who will believe and receive it. His grace is undeserved, unearned, and wholly apart from anything we could have done from ourselves.

5. People must hear the Gospel to believe and be saved

We can only believe on Jesus when we've heard the message! That's what Paul says...

Romans 10:14–15 (ESV) ¹⁴ *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? ¹⁷ *"Faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the Word of God."*

You say, "Well, what if someone never heard about Jesus but responded just to what they saw of God in creation or in their conscience, like in those ways you talked about at the beginning?"

- Well, remember, Paul has already showed you that all people responded to those things about God with rejection, without exception...
- Vs. 17 says the only way for faith to grow up in the heart (v. 17) is what? Hearing! And hearing comes through the Word of God.
 - The preached word of God has a strange, life giving power. This is a little mystical. The Word of God not only tells you what to do, it gives you the power to do it.
 - Like the words of Jesus "Rise up and walk." Not only does it give you a command, in those words are the power to obey the command.
 - Here's my analogy: Standing on top of a building... The Word of God heals as you hear it.
 - That healing comes through the preaching of the Word of God... without the word of God, there can be no faith

You say, "Well, I still think that someone could just look around and respond to God and do what's right and God count that... I mean, God is fair, and at that point they are doing all they could."

- Interestingly, the book of Acts tells you a story about a guy just like that, named Cornelius. **Acts 10:1–3:** *"There was a certain man... called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, 'Cornelius!' And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, 'What is it, lord?' So he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send for ...Peter. He will tell you what you must do.'"*

Now, what happens next... Peter comes to him and says, "Cornelius, God told me to come talk to you." And Cornelius explains the situation and Peter tells him about his own dream... then Peter explains to Him the Gospel... and in **Acts 10:43** Peter concludes his sermon to Cornelius by saying, **"To Jesus all the prophets give witness, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."**

Notice, Peter does not say, "Cornelius, God has noticed you're a good guy and God has already accepted your implicit faith in Christ... and I'm here to announce to you that you're already saved." No, he says you must believe in Jesus and then you will receive the forgiveness of sins through His name.

In fact, in the next chapter when Peter recounts this story to the other Apostles, this is what he says: **Acts 11:13–14**, "Cornelius told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send for... Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

- Will be saved. Not, to announce to him that he has been saved. To be saved, Cornelius had to hear the message, and to hear the message, Peter had to go preach it to him.

In the Bible, the Gospel never goes forward except through a human instrument. Search Acts. You won't find it.

- You say, "Well, how do you know God doesn't do stuff He doesn't tell us about?" Could God have done some stuff He never told us about? I guess He could...
- But the point remains that there is not one hint in Scripture that God works outside of human instruments in His church.
- **The angel that God sent to Cornelius' house didn't even explain the Gospel.** Wouldn't that have been easiest? The angle sent Cornelius to Peter so Peter could explain the Gospel. It's always a human instrument!

Paul says, *How will they call on him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear unless they are sent?* Paul doesn't leave open the door for this happening any other way than us going!

Listen... Do you ever think that maybe God is stirring up some of you at this moment precisely because He is working in someone like Cornelius over there?

- **Girl on plane...**
- **I've experienced that... Fajar**
- Maybe God is raising some of you up to go because He is working in some of them over there.
- **Maybe that is what is happening right now!**

Summarize: (**Romans 10:14–15 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *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?*)

- The idea that God will be out there preaching the Gospel Himself to lost nations and He'll get it done on His own so that we can go on about our lives playing with our toys and messing around in church is a convenient fiction.
- The inconvenient truth is that if people in the world are to hear the Gospel, we, the church, are the only ones who can preach it to them.

So that leads me, lastly, to #6. The task is urgent

We are the only means of their hearing. There is no Plan B.

Listen to me...

- At most, 1/3 of the people on earth claim to be Christians. That means there are at least 4.5 billion lost people on the planet.

- The Joshua Project, a missions research company, estimates that about ½ of those have little or no access to the Gospel.
 - Each of those people is just like you... hurt, lonely, fear, for whom going to hell is a tragedy...
 - Joseph Stalin
 - 6,645 UPG's. (group of 10K or more united by a common language with no Gospel witness). Do you hear that?

There is no other way that they hear. There is no plan-B.

When God called me... it was through this. I was reading the book of Romans. Life-defining moments...

- Deny it... this is what many Christians choose to do. They change the word of God to fit their preferences. Path to liberalism, why so popular...
- Ignore it ... just don't think about it.. give lip service to believing but live as if it's not true...
- Or, I knew I could give my life fully to it, which I chose to do. I could say like Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

I know I can't do everything. I can't save the world. This is a burden I can't sustain. I know...

- One of the most comforting things to me... Acts 1, after Jesus had dropped on them the Great Commission, He says, "Go and wait"/Do NOTHING until the Holy Spirit comes. In other words, you can't do this... He'll do it through you.
- But the only thing He's going to use to get the job done is us, the church. So each of us have to offer ourselves to God to be used for that purpose.

Summit, we can't go on about our lives as if this were not true. We are the only thing God uses to take the Gospel.

If you lined up all the people who are unreached in a single file line they would circle the earth 25x. *Can you imagine a line of people as*

long as the earth, 25 people wide, trampling hopelessly to destruction?

Here's a question... Do you really believe the Gospel? Does how you live and how you give show you believe the Gospel?

- I would say... it is impossible to really understand what you've been rescued from and not turn to rescue others. It's just normal compassion...
- Here's how I know that... **railroad tracks**. You must never have seen it. Which makes me wonder if you've been saved.
- So, if you aren't actively engaged in getting the Gospel to the lost, you must not really understand or really believe the Gospel!

Why is that that you are saved? There is nothing about you that made you better... God in His grace saved you. You can't understand that and not be moved for people all over the world who are no worse than you, who are made in the image of God just like you... who have never heard about Jesus!

This is what changes your life! If this is true, we don't have time to play games. We don't have time to play church. We don't have time to spend our lives collecting toys.

- What are you majoring in? Have you thought about your life in light of global priorities?
- *What are you thinking about doing in your retirement?* Met an older guy who had been given a lot of money... retiring and talked about a hobby where he wanted to go around the world and collect... Really? He told me he was a Christian... and I wanted to say, "You believe the Gospel and you're going to use the last 15 years of your life before you meet Jesus and resources to collect toys?"

Now, let me try and clear up a couple of things you might be thinking... (1) "J.D., You don't sound very tolerant." Now, I don't want to be misunderstood... but I don't really have time for tolerance.

What we need is not tolerance, but urgent, grace-filled preaching. Now, I believe in liberty. Complete liberty... which means I believe in people's right to disagree with me and publicly state that and would give my life to preserve that right, and would never want to see people coerced to believe what I believe or think I should have any kind of favored position in our society. We want liberty for all, and that includes liberty to tell you the message we believe is given by God.

(2) Some of you say, **“Is this like what the angry pit preacher believes?”** No. Because people who get this aren't really harsh and arrogant, because when you get this you have a deep sense of the love of God and what He's saved you from?

- Your life is characterized by humility... And by self-giving sacrifice. Which is why here at this church we strive to love the poor, take care of the prisoner and the orphan.
- Our way of making Christ known is not to preach angry sermons and condemn everyone, but to love and serve them and show them what the love and generosity of the cross looks like.

There is no way to be saved apart from people hearing about Jesus, and we, the church, are the only way they hear about Him. So, what you are going to do about this?

- Deny it? Do you feel yourself sliding down the path to liberalism?
- Ignore it? you would never say you are a liberal, but you live like one.
- Embrace it and yield your life to the implications?

Later you'll see video of the Lawrence's: never been on a plane. Hadn't gone to college; grew up in Roxboro; never been on a plane, the implications of this is what drove them.

Bullpen:

- One of my favorite authors on this is **Soren Kierkegaard** said: *"People try to persuade us that the objections against Christianity spring from intellectual doubt. (Atheism) springs from insubordination, the dislike of obedience, and rebellion against all authority."* **Soren Kierkegaard**
 - A great example of this... **Aldous Huxley**, one of the most famous agnostics of the modern era, *"I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; and consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption... For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, (atheism) was essentially an instrument of liberation...from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom..."* **Aldous Huxley**
 - Atheism's ultimate locus is in the heart, not the head. That's why **Blaise Pascal** said that if you try to convince the atheist to believe in God by using rational arguments, you are usually wasting your time. (Not that you shouldn't make them. We should show them there is answer.) But the problem, Pascal says, is that the atheist doesn't *want to believe*. What you have to do, Pascal says, is first to awaken in the atheist a desire for God, and then the head will soon follow.
- **The other critique is that this position seems intolerant, if not unkind, in a civilized world...** Like you think you know the

truth because evidently you are smarter than everybody... and the assumption is that people who think their way is the only way will soon want to outlaw everyone else's opinion, or, at least you'll always look condescendingly down on everyone who disagrees with you, because clearly if they were smarter or more spiritual they would agree with you... And so you're hopelessly arrogant and a snob who doesn't respect the perspectives of others, and who wants to be friends with a snob?

- I had a friend who was an atheist, and my 5 year old daughter was asking me about what he believed. So I was trying to explain it to her, respectfully, and she listened... looked out the window in the car, and said, "Well, if there's no God, where do they think everything came from?" I explained the big bang... She said, "Well, who stuffed all the stuff in there so it could bang out?" I thought, that's a great question... why is there something rather than nothing? Atheism essentially has to say, *"Nothing x nobody = everything."*

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- I started off this message dealing with the objection that "It's not fair." What I showed you is that it is fair... what is fair is that we all go to hell. The opportunity to be saved is an undeserved 2nd chance. What is not fair is that those of us who have heard do nothing...

- I love Paul's closing words to this argument in **Romans 10:15**, *"As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"* It's not fully on you... you can't do it all. But, like the little boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fish, you can offer what you have to Jesus and say, "Jesus, I'll live on less. Take what I have and multiply it for the nations." Or, "Jesus, I only have 1 life, but instead of spending it pursuing my dreams, prosperity and my comfort, I'll give my life to go and live in one of these unreached people groups... I'll let you take my one to life and invest it for the salvation of the nations."

- You can have beautiful feet because they bring news of the King's mercy, and undeserved chance to be saved and reconciled to Him.
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- If this is true, we don't have time to play games. Owning all the stuff we think we should own is not important. Aren't lost people worth more than our stuff? Isn't seeing lost nations come to be saved more beautiful?
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- We don't have time to play around in the church. People say, "I wish this church had this program or that program. I don't like to have walk so far from the parking lot. I don't like the video." Friend, listen... If you are saved, it's not about you. If you don't Christ, this is all about you. We do what we do so you can know.
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- Some of you have a hard time with this... you think this is hopelessly arrogant and intolerant... I understand why you'd feel that way... but we don't come up with these things because we like them...
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- When Peter was pressed on why he believed this, he said, 'Look... Jesus rose from the dead. He makes the rules.'
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- The way I see it, to not go would be the greatest act of cruelty...
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- then there are a lot of Christians who just don't think much about this... they say, "Well, I know what I believe but I won't bother everybody else about this... in the end that is their business and it will all work out."

The 1st thing I want you to notice is that the Apostles believed this and taught it clearly, even in the face of intense opposition...

- In Acts 3 Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus, and then used that opportunity to explain that just like the name of Jesus could make a lame man walk, that the name of Jesus could bring salvation, and only in the name of Jesus could you find salvation.
- Here is what Peter said, "Neither is there..."
- Now, that was as unpopular in Peter's day as it was in ours... The ancient Romans had turned pluralism into a political art.
- Historians tell us that 3 religious realities of the ancient world were as follows:
 - There were many gods
 - You can believe anything you want
 - Just don't say your God is the supreme God... why? If you thought your god was the supreme god, you'd think you were the supreme people. If you thought your God ruled all the gods, then you'd think that you, as His people, should rule, too.
- So, you could believe anything you wanted, you just had to acknowledge that Caesar was Lord... they described Caesar with phrases like, "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords" and "Son of God." Which meant, "Believe anything you want, but give ultimate allegiance to the state."
- Along comes the Apostles saying "Jesus is Lord," and "He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords" and "there is salvation in no one else," and "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth." These were not accidental phrases. This was a direct challenge to Caesar.
- More than that, this message, that in Jesus alone was salvation, was the impetus to take the Gospel to all nations and peoples on the earth. How could they do anything but that? So, they went everywhere commanding people, on the authority of Jesus and in demonstrations of the power of the Spirit to repent and believe on Jesus for salvation.
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