

Romans 10:5-17

“Do you feel close to God?” NASB

“Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES



IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”

However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

We’ll talk today about:

- A) Beautiful feet;**
- B) Excellent help for our needs is nearby.**
- C) The benefits that help provides us.**

A) Why this reference to beautiful feet?

We see frequent references to other body parts.

- Saul Bellow described a character as: "Awful [looking]. . . like an oil filter that should have been changed five thousand miles ago."¹
- Rex Reed once depicted Marvin Hamlish: "He looks at certain angles, like a cheeseburger with all the ingredients oozing awkwardly out of the bun."

Andrew Kaplan characterized a fellow:

"With his small dark eyes and jowly cheeks he looked like an intelligent bulldog."

We currently hear more about shoe fashion than we hear about the feet that fit into those trendy foot coverings.

Nike, Skechers, Adidas, etc. excel at hyping costly footwear.

Whether athletes perform better in their brands takes second place to the impact



¹ Similes Dictionary, p- 307

their shoes leave on impressionable spectators.

They want every budding athlete on the planet to wear their brands.

Yet years ago, among my sources, I found only one that referred to feet.

"Her feet beneath her petticoat, Like little mice stole in and out, As if they'd feared the light."²

Before Covid19 times, one often saw this sign in eating establishments:

"No shoes, no shirt, no service."

Probable meaning:

"We don't want to see your bare feet in here."

The Bible refers often to feet.

They symbolize such things as:

1. Walking, preparation, readiness.
2. Power: conquerors put feet on necks of the vanquished.

² Sir John Suckling 1609-1642, *Ballad. Upon a Wedding*

3. Subordination: "kneeling at someone's feet."

4. Veneration:

Remember the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, kissed them, and anointed his feet with perfume?

5. Washing another's feet epitomizes service and humility.

Why does our text mention "beautiful feet"?"

History helps us answer the question.

As events happen today, if TV cameras aren't on the scene, someone with an iPhone will be.

Imagine a world without radio, TV, newspapers, or iPhones.

We might enjoy a little more peace, less controversy, and fewer rat-finks.

Prior to the popularity of horses, news traveled mostly by long distance runners.

You likely know the history of marathon races:

When the Athenians defeated the Persians in 490 BC, a runner ran across a plain called Marathon, situated northeast of Athens (approx. 26 miles) to inform the Athenians of their victory.



A runner bringing good news was said to have beautiful feet.

I once sat in the surgical waiting room at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital with a young member of our church. He and his wife were hardworking, loving, faithful Christians. The wife developed a brain tumor. Surgery to attempt removal of that tumor took several hours. After a lengthy time, I became impatient, got up, went to the doorway, and looked toward the surgery area. I saw the doctor walking in our direction. From the movement of his feet and the way he hung his head, I could tell that the news wasn't good. The young wife suffered an inoperable brain tumor and died within a few weeks.

Though he was a good man and highly skilled, the surgeon didn't have *beautiful feet* that day.

"As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

But "What is this good news?"

B) Excellent help is nearby.

C) This help is available to everyone.

Anyone genuinely seeking it can find it.

- **No one has to come back from the dead to tell us where it is.**
- **We don't need some person telling us about a near-death experience, who thought he\she spent time in heaven.**

Someone close can tell us what we need to know. He came back from death to show us that real help, new life is possible for anyone and everyone. **As "Scripture says, 'WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.'**"

I didn't learn about this person in college, sitting at the feet of any professor, or even from my parents.

I learned about him from reading the Bible.

But to benefit from his help, I must stop living by society's standards and follow God's one and only Son, Jesus.

Trust him.

Love him.

Live in peace, in purity, and forgive others.

God takes care of the rest.

Though most of us consider ourselves believers, we rarely talk about God or His Christ.

We consider ourselves Christians, but we don't discuss God much away from church.

This creates a dilemma for us similar to what the character Jeffy experienced in the comic strip *Family Circus*, written by Bill Keane.



Jeffy forlornly picked up his flat football, which a car ran over. Little Jeffy said to himself,

"I need a new football. I don't know if I should send up a prayer, write a letter to Santa Claus, or call Grandma."

Neither do many know how to find life-answers.

How should we fit God into 21st century living?

Some scientists, the media, and schools lead us in one direction.

Our religion takes us in another.

On a field trip to a fire station, a firefighter told the kindergarten class what to do in case of fire. "First you go to the door," he said, "and you feel it to see if it's hot. Then you get down on your knees.

Does anyone here know why you do that?"

"Sure," said one tyke, "you get down on your knees to ask God to get you out of this mess."

Most of us experience messiness in some part of life.

Unresolved anger, anxiety, guilt, and doubt cause many to suffer deeply wounded psyches.

When that happens to us, our heads get messy. Bewilderment sets in.

A few years ago, "Christianity Today" dedicated an issue to the subject of depression.

Mental health experts agree that depression is now at epidemic proportions.

They disagree about the causes of gloominess.

Articles in the CT issue were contributed by psychiatrists, psychologists, ministers, and others who experienced depression.

They reached few conclusions.



After I read those articles, I felt about as satisfied as when I last watched a congressional hearing.

Writers filled the pages with theory, anecdotes, and some facts.

No one agreed on either the causes or the cures of depression.

You probably know the following:

The increased incidence of depression occurred while three things decreased in our society.

1. Fewer people attend church and Bible school than attended 50-75 years ago.

NASCAR, NFL, the NBA, Little League, wrestling, soccer and chores often draw more attention on Sundays than church services.

Many churches hold Saturday evening worship, so folks can have Saturday nights and Sundays free.

Some church-goers have weakly conceded their Lord's Day to the world.

2. Many now live by society's standards, not God's Word in Scripture.

Hollywood's comedians, producers, and rap artists join New York editors, social and network media, and politicians in corrupting the country's morals.

3. Think of the loss of community.

Fifty to 75 years ago, life centered on families, churches, and even lodges.

Now, many politicians emphasize government solutions, not God centered ones.

People in urban areas often don't know God or their next door neighbors.

They form friendships on cruises, at bars, at work, and on the internet.

Significant numbers of people:

- suffer alienation from God;
- feel guilt they can't resolve;
- are disconnected from family and other supportive people.



As a result, many feel lonely and depressed.

Chances are you've recently had a bad night feeling depressed and anxious.

Were some of those sleepless nights related to miserable relationships, doubt, anger, or unresolved guilt?

To get through some tough times, a Ph.D. candidate started taking antidepressant drugs.

A Christian therapist got him started.

The drugs helped in the beginning, he said.

Then he realized that those drugs affected him in ways he didn't like.

He said this: "The antidepressants kept me feeling good even when I should not have."³

The Bible makes the following clear:

- God created us to have fellowship with him;
 - He also designed us to behave responsibly and to live by the standards he built into us.
- He meant us to live harmoniously with others.

³ "My Life with Antidepressants," Joel Scandrett, Christianity Today, March 2009, p - 26

God gave us consciences so we'd feel guilty when we're out of sync with his design.

When depressed, we need to honestly look at what we're doing.

Modern psychology tends to emphasize feeling, but we need to examine our own behavior.

If we suffer anxiety and depression, there's a good chance we're out of step with God's purpose and design for us.

Do godly people suffer depression?

Elijah the prophet fought some bouts with it. So did Paul the Apostle.

Their misery related to the fact that they took their eyes off God.

Elijah got himself into a "poor me" state.

He had a big "pity party" going (See 1 Kings 19).

P-I-T-Y P-A-R-T-Y



When we get "down" it's usually due to one of the following:

- **We've violated one of God's moral laws;**

- **Holding some long-term bitterness.**

- **Or have a first-class, pity-party going.**

Some depression has medical origins, and it's wise to see a doctor.

- **But most important, we examine our behavior by Jesus' standards.**
 - **Inventory our anger, envy, and bitterness.**
- **Make sure we aren't in a self-pity cesspool.**

To folks who'd acted bitterly, Peter said:

"Repent . . . and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord," (Acts 3:19 NIV).

And "When God raised up his servant (Jesus), he sent him . . . to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:26 NIV).

Life changes when we stop doing wrong, quit our anger, and self-pity, and trust in Christ.

We feel near to God and forgiven by Him.

Our text tells us that God sent Jesus to help us.

He is nearby and available to everyone who will turn to him.

He wants us to share this good news with others.

When we share Jesus, our feet become beautiful—and everything else does, too.

C) A true story illustrates how putting Jesus in control of our life benefits us.

(11) "As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'"

Some of us half-heartedly serve God, and that never works.

Several years ago, a young couple began attending services at the Church of Christ in Hollywood. They were both so attractive, many people called them Ken and Barbi. The wife accepted Christ almost immediately, but the husband struggled a long time before he accepted Jesus and was baptized. About a year before Norma and I retired from the Hollywood church, the couple moved back to their southern home state. Years after Norma and I came to Iowa, the husband called. He didn't want or need anything. He just called to say,



"Thanks for sharing Jesus with me. I was so stubborn and into myself that I didn't want to accept him. But once I have, he's brought such joy."

God wants you to succeed.

The world doesn't need any more hate.

**When we stop doing wrong,
give up our anger, envy and self-pity,
and trust in Christ, life changes.**

We feel near to God and forgiven by Him.

Jesus saves us.

We don't have to do everything right to please Him.

I pray we'll all get busy sharing this message.

"As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

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