

Tell the Good News!

Isaiah 52:7 & Romans 10:10-

Good morning. My name is John and I'm glad you're here today for the Christmas Eve service to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Before we begin, we want to welcome our EFC supported missionaries who are visiting with us. Also, I want to mention that beginning January 1, we as a church will be doing a bible reading together each day. If you have not already received a copy, please pick one up on the Connection Table in the back. It is always a blessing to read God's Word, and to read the Bible through from cover to cover is very rewarding. So, on behalf of the Elders and Church Leadership, we want to invite you to join us as we take this journey together in reading God's Word. Remember, that the Bible says in *Hebrews 4:12*, "***For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***"

The month of December we are in a sermon series called "**The Peace that Christ Brings.**" The first week Pastor Jeremy preached on having peace with God. The second week I spoke on having peace like a river. Last week Pastor Jeremy spoke on having the peace of God through life's difficult circumstances. Last night Pastor Jeremy spoke on the invitation of peace. Today I want to finish the series with the title, "Tell the Good News of Peace."

Isaiah 52:7

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

In the Prophet Isaiah's passage, and also the Apostle Paul's quotation of the Prophet Isaiah in Romans 10, he talks about someone who proclaims a message of good news, a publication of peace.

In the year 490 B.C., the Battle of Marathon took place in Ancient Greece. This was a battle that took place between the Athenians and the Persians. The fighting took place around 40 kilometers from Athens. The Persian force commanders, which included Datis and Artaphernes lead a superior army against the Greeks. However, the Greeks won this amazing battle as they weren't expected to win this conflict. The Persians, who thought that they didn't need their full army to take this battle, sent their other soldiers on ships around the bay to Athens, which was unguarded and unprotected. Having won the battle, the Greeks sent a runner, an Athenian herald, whose name was Pheidippides, to Sparta, which was about 240 kilometers to tell the Greek army not to surrender to the Persians because the Athenians had defeated them already. According to historians, the runner ran the 240 kilometers in less than two days to herald the news of the victory.

Please open your bibles to **Romans 10:9-15**

9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

11 For the scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him 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!"

We are talking today about the good news, the Gospel. It is the news that Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness of God on the cross, and reconciled us as human beings to have peace with God. **Romans 5:1**

says, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Remember what I mentioned a few weeks ago about this verse. Justified, what does that mean? Justification means to be declared righteous. It is a legal court room term where the judge declares you not guilty for a particular crime. Therefore, when the bible says that we have been justified, God in heaven declares us legally not guilty for the infractions against Him. When we get saved, when we trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God can declare us legally not guilty because He credits the righteousness of Jesus Christ to our account. It is because Jesus Christ on the cross paid your infraction. Jesus on the cross paid my debt. It allows God the Father to declare us as not guilty, not because we’re not guilty, because we are guilty, but because the debt that was incurred by being guilty was paid on the cross by the death of Jesus Christ, the sinless son of God, who paid the penalty for our sin. That’s legal forgiveness that everyone receives when they accept Jesus Christ as your personal substitutional sacrifice on the cross which was credited to your account that declares you innocent legally. That is an eternal issue that is settled when you come to faith in Christ for salvation.

That is good news! Not only are we justified by faith, but Romans 10 tells us that not only the Jews can receive salvation, but also the Gentiles, for which you and me are recipients of that good news. Paul quotes the Prophet Joel in *Romans 10:13*

13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

That’s good news! But then the Apostle Paul goes on to teach us that salvation, that good news that we can have peace with God, is not to be kept to ourselves. It is to be share, to be proclaimed throughout the world.

Let’s look at the following phrase in *Romans 10:14*.

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

Do you know that there are people right here in Quito that do not believe in Jesus? Do you know that if you were to share the Gospel with people right here in Quito, they wouldn't even know whom to believe? That Jesus on the only true and living God and that He is the only one to place their faith and trust in.

Several years ago, there was a young man who walked in the front door. He introduced himself to me and asked if it were ok for him to come to church. I assured him that he was welcome to come. He told me that he had studied many religions of the world; Mormonism, Hinduism, and many other isms. He wanted to come to our church to learn about Christianity and then he would decide which religion he would believe in. With a smile on my face, I welcomed him to come and see for himself.

Week after week, after the morning service, I would meet with him and we would study The Story of Hope bible study. It is a chronological bible study that looks at the world narrative of the scriptures. The first week we looked at ***Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God..."*** and that there is only one true and living God that is eternal and has always existed. The following week we look at the creation story in Genesis 1. The next week we look at the creation of man and women and that we were created in God's image. The next few weeks we looked at the origin of sin, its consequences, and God's promise of redemption. As we started to study about the first substitutional sacrificial death and that God had clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, this young man began to cry. As tears rolled down his cheeks, he began to tell me his life story.

When he was just a child, his father left home and abandoned his mother and family. His father had left him, his siblings, and his mother destitute. His mother had to find a job to support her family. They lost everything and had struggled throughout their lives. So, then I realized why he was

searching for meaning in his life. There was no stability in his life, and now he was searching for something stable, something that would give him meaning in his life. The Bible says, “***How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?***”

Let’s look at the next phrase in ***Romans 10:14***, “***And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard?*** Do you know that there are people here in Quito, here in Ecuador, here in the Andes Mountains who have never heard the name of Jesus? Do you know that there are people who have never heard that Jesus loves them, that he died to save them, that he has declared them justified if they just place their faith and trust in Him?

Several years ago, I visited an ancient Inca village here in the Andes Mountains. The tour guide told us about the religious beliefs of the ancient Incas. He said that they believed in a Supreme Being, and that Being consisted of a Trinity for which he explained in detail. He then said that one of the deities in the Trinity impregnated a woman here on earth. Also, that they believed that the Supreme Being would get angry and manifest His wrath on them. They believed that the only way to appease this deity’s wrath was through human blood sacrifices. Then the tour guide showed us a large stone on top of the mountain. That stone had an indentation where a person’s head would lay and another indentation where the blood would flow. The ancient Incas would sacrifice women and children until they felt that the deity’s wrath was satisfied.

As he told that story, my heart broke. There in the civilization of the ancient Incas, they had the eternity written in their hearts. The bible says in ***Ecclesiastes 3:11***, “***He has made everything beautiful in his time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.***”

Romans 1:18-20

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.

20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

My heart broke when I heard the tour guide tell us that story. Because, about a thousand years prior to the time the Incas lived in that village, Jesus Christ had cried out on the cross, “It is finished!” and the wrath of God had been completely satisfied. Yet, no one had told these people. No one had told them that there was no need to shed innocent blood to appease the gods because Jesus Christ had fulfilled the righteousness of God, once and for all!

Romans 10:14

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

The next phrase in this verse doesn’t mean hearing Pastor Jeremy, Pastor Chris, Pastor Joe, Pastor Roberto or even Pastor John preach. The word preach, or preaching means to proclaim. How are people going to hear the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ if we do not proclaim it?

Romans 1:16 says, “***For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***”

Several years ago, back when we use to do “hello and goodbye’s”, there was a man who stood up and introduced himself. He told everyone from what country for which he had come from and then made the following

statement: “I’m here to learn about Jesus. I don’t know anything about Jesus but would like to know about him.”

Later that afternoon, I met with him at a coffee shop in Quicentro. I gave him a bible in his language and began to talk with him about his family, his country, and about his life. He asked again, “Can you tell me about Jesus?” I assured him that I could, but asked him how long he had planned on being here in Quito. He said just two days. I told him to come back the next day and meet me at the coffee shop again and that I would tell him about Jesus.

That night I prayed. I asked God to show him who Jesus was and that He had come to save him. The next day we met again. I took the bible study booklet, “The Message of Hope”, a chronological bible study of the narrative of scriptures which focuses on those who have a Muslim background. We started from the beginning in ***Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God.”***, went through the creation story, the creation of man and women, the origin of sin and sin’s consequences. We then went through the substitution sacrifices that were taught through scripture and that Jesus himself was our substitutional sacrifice on the cross. Because this man had no background of the scriptures, our study of the narrative of the scriptures took about three hours. At the end of our time together, he got up from the table and said, “thank you” and then he left. As I reflected on that time together, my heart cried out to God that in some way, he understood the Gospel, even with my feeble attempt to share or proclaim it to him.

The next day, as he was on the plane returning to his country, he sent me a text in broken English that said, “John, read bible, decide born again!”

Romans 10:14

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him 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?

This is where the local church comes into play. There are many good and wonderful NGO's and foundations that help throughout the world.

During the earthquake of 2016, charitable organizations from all over the world came to Ecuador to assist in the devastation. Unicef, the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, Samaritans Purse, and other NGO's around the world came to assist. Our own Pan de Vida and other partner organizations assisted during that time. Some of you represent different charitable foundations that assist the many needs here in Ecuador. But let me share with you, that only the church of Jesus Christ has the message of salvation. People who have been saved, bought by the blood of the lamb, people who have been redeemed and who have hope in eternal life. Only God's people can be sent to proclaim that message that we can have peace with God! No other organization has that privilege in doing so. The Great Commission was given to us, as God's people and followers of Jesus Christ in ***Matthew 28:18-20***

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Let's look at our passage again. ***Romans 10:14-15***

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him 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!"

In the year 490 B.C, a runner by the name of Pheidippides ran over 240 kilometers to tell the Greek army that the enemy, the Persian army had been defeated. His actions in heralding the good news gave hope to a despondent nation of the hopelessness of the invading army.

We too, have been given the good news that Jesus has defeated Satan, death, and hell on the cross. We have been given the hope of salvation, that we can have peace with God. Not only do we have peace with God, but we are responsible of proclaiming that peace with God to a lost and dying world. A world in need of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.