

Why People Are Lost

Romans 10:16 - 21

16But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. 18But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." 19Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." 20And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." 21But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

In today's Bible lesson, we deal with the painful reality that not everyone responds to the gospel message. In fact, many remain lost even after hearing the story of Christ and His cross. Paul painfully confronted this reality in his day with respect to his countrymen, his fellow Jews. He wrote in verse 16 that "not all the Israelites accepted the good news." In thinking about why some remain lost, David Jeremiah raised and answered several questions that we will include in our lesson.

First, was the message dispatched to the people? According to verse 15, the good news of Jesus had been dispatched or communicated to the people of Israel. The prophets, God's Word, the preaching of the gospel by disciples and apostles and even the words of work of Jesus Himself made the gospel message clear, discernible and available.

Second, was the message delivered? According to verse 16, the message of Jesus had been delivered. Some did believe. Those who believed could not have believed if the message had not been success-fully delivered to the Jews.

Third, was the gospel message deciphered? Did people hear it? According to verses 17-18, the answer again is yes. Paul wrote in verse 18 "of course they did." Let's recognize a broader point. God has revealed Himself in the creation and the human conscience in addition to Christ and Scripture. Historically, man has dismissed the revelation that has been available to him.

Fourth, was the gospel message discerned? Were the people able to fathom or distinguish what it meant? In verse 19, Paul said the Jews had the luxury of the law and the prophets to help them process and

understand the gospel message. The work of Jesus was easily discernible to Jews blessed with the word and law of God. So discernible in fact, that God presented the same message to Gentiles who did not have the same benefits and luxuries and they understood the message and eagerly responded to God's work in Christ.

Fifth, was the message discovered? In verse 20, Paul said the message was easily discovered by Gentiles. The message was found by those who were not even looking for it (20). The Gentiles had no history or tradition that would have led them to be looking watchfully for the Messiah. But the Jews did. They had every reason to look for and discover the Messiah. God can be found by those who seek Him. God reveals Himself to those who ask. Consider the words of Jesus in Luke 11:9-11. Still, some reject what is plainly in front of them.

Sixth, was the message disobeyed? At last, Paul identified the real reason why some remain lost even after hearing the gospel message. Simple disobedience is the reason. In verse 21, Israel was identified as disobedient and obstinate. They disregarded the hands of God that had been held out to them. In applying this conclusion to people today, David Jeremiah wrote, *"I say this with all compassion and humility, but I must say it: if you are lost today, it is because you want to be lost: you choose to be lost."*

What is our response to this? We pray for people. We share the gospel. We ask the Holy Spirit to convict those who are lost. But we recognize that some people will hear and reject the message of Jesus for reasons no greater than disobedience. God has been faithful to pro-claim the news of His Son. Those who are lost are without excuse.

Applications . . .

1. Give thanks for your salvation.
2. Pray for those you know who have stubbornly and defiantly rejected the message of Jesus. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be at work in their lives.
3. Remember to pray for God to be at work in our soccer ministry.
4. Memorize Romans 10:17.