

I Will Call Upon the Lord Romans 10:11-15

Introduction

Frank McCourt – the author of bestseller - ‘Angela’s Ashes’ - - - a memoir of the misery and squalor of his Irish childhood.

He shares one scene from his childhood growing up dirt poor - during the depression era in Ireland with an alcoholic / bum of a father. On several occasions his family moved to a new apartment trying to improve their situation. Oftentimes the move would prove to be a disappointment. He describes one moment of revelation in their new surroundings.

“While we’re drinking our tea an old man passes our door with a bucket in his hand. He empties the bucket into the lavatory and flushes and there’s a powerful stink in our kitchen. [Mother] goes to the door and says, ‘why are you emptying your bucket in our lavatory? He raises his cap to her. Your lavatory missus? Ah no – you’re making a bit of a mistake there – ha ha. This is not your lavatory. Sure, isn’t this the lavatory for the whole lane. You’ll see passing your door here the buckets of eleven families and I can tell you it gets very powerful here in the warm weather, very powerful altogether. Tis December now . . . with a chill in the air . . . and the lavatory isn’t that bad, but the day will come when you’ll be calling for a gas mask. So goodnight to you missus and I hope you’ll be happy in your house.’

Mother says, ‘wait a minute sir – can you tell me who cleans the lavatory?’ ‘Cleans? Ah that’s a good one. Is it joking you are? If this lavatory was ever cleaned it must have been done by someone in the middle of the night when no one was lookin’. And he shuffles up the lane laughing to himself.’ [Angela’s Ashes, p. 92]

Needless to say – their new apartment was a bit of a disappointment

Frank eventually immigrated to the US – where he became a teacher and later won a Pulitzer Prize for his book

We come to a Scripture passage this morning – where Paul says

Romans 10:11 - “whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

When Paul wants to describe the result of putting our trust in Christ – what will be the outcome?

Will we regret making such a move? Will anyone regret having given their life to Christ?

Paul here reminds us - - no one will go into eternity saying, ‘I trusted in God and now I wish I had not’

On that day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord - - - there will be no disappointment on behalf of the redeemed

Richard Baxter: 'Someday the wicked will see Him and cry out, 'there is He whose blood we neglected, whose grace we resisted, whose counsels we refused, whose government we cast off!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'On the other hand - the saints with inconceivable gladness will cry out, 'there is He whose blood has redeemed us, whose Spirit cleansed us. There comes He in whom we trusted, and now we see He hath not deceived our trust; He for whom we have long awaited, and now we see we have not awaited in vain.'

I. No Disappointment - vv. 11-12

This is certainly one of the great gospel texts

If you put your trust in Christ – believe the claims of Scripture – of forgiveness / of reconciliation with God / of eternal life / of being adopted in God's family - - - you will not be disappointed or ashamed in that position of trust

God is faithful to His Word

You would be ashamed if at the end – you found out that Jesus does not save after all

Imagine if Noah and his family – built the ark – then after all that – the rains came and the ark sank beneath the flood – end of story – that's disappointing! [We wouldn't be here to read about it either!]

Or – what if Naaman the leper went down to the Jordan River to dip in it 7 times and came back and was still leprous?

What if the children of Israel covered their door posts with the blood of the Passover lamb – but still experienced the death of their first born like the Egyptians?

The point: that's not how God operates / He has a track record of faithfulness [that record is right here in the Bible]

Deut. 7:9 - 'Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God.'

i.e. – know this! - - - He is faithful

God says:

I John 1:9 - 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' [KJV]

These are not just the words of a politician or used car salesman – they are the words of God to us

If God makes a promise - He keeps it

He's not like us – where we forget things / or fail to follow through – or are prevented by circumstances outside our control

A couple in their nineties were having problems remembering things. During a check-up the doctor told them that they're physically ok – but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember better.

Later that night – while watching tv – the old man gets up from his chair – ‘Want anything while I'm in the kitchen? - he asks

‘Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?’ – ‘Sure’

‘Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember?’ – she asks

‘No – I can remember’

‘Well – I'd like some strawberries on top too – maybe you should write that down’

The old man responds: ‘I can remember that – you want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries on top.’

‘I'd also like whipped cream’ ‘I'm certain you'll forget that – just write it down’

Irritated – he says, ‘I don't need to write it down – I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream – I got it for goodness sake!’

After about 20 minutes in the kitchen - - - the old man returns and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment – then says: ‘Did you forget my toast?’

That is humanity – we forget things

Can you imagine God saying, ‘Now what promise did I make back in 57 AD thru the Apostle Paul – something about whoever calls . . . ?

Wayne Grudem: 'God's faithfulness means that God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised. He can be relied upon, and He will never prove unfaithful to those who trust what He has said. Indeed, the essence of true faith is taking God at His word and relying on Him to do as He has promised.'

If God says He will save the sinner who repents and trusts in the Son – then that's what is going to happen – because He cannot lie – we will not be disappointed

We do have disappointments in life – it's sin that disappoints! / it is acts of selfishness that disappoint - - - or leads one to regret

David certainly regretted his choice to commit adultery with Bathsheba - - - child died from that union / chaos came into his family - - - but he was forgiven by God

Martin Buber was a theological professor in Germany around the time of WW I – and he was visited by a student who came to see him with a pressing issue. The student had received a draft notice to fight in the army. This student was a pacifist by nature and afraid of being killed in battle – but at the same time he was a loyal and patriotic German who loved his country.

He asked Buber what he should do – serve his country and risk being killed or claim ‘conscientious objector’ status and perhaps leave another young man to be killed in his place?

Buber was in the midst of wrestling with some difficult philosophical problems and was annoyed by the young man’s claim on his time and attention. He said something like, ‘That is a serious dilemma; do what you think is right.’ [sent him on his way] The young man – in despair for lack of guidance – committed suicide and Buber – for the rest of his life felt a measure of guilt – for not being more available to that young man in his crisis – for seeing him as an interruption – to his own time

He was disappointed in his own actions and choice

When a person puts their faith in Jesus Christ – that is one decision – they will never regret or be disappointed in

The only people who will meet with disappointment and shame at the return of Christ will be those who put their trust in vanity – and the fleeting things of this world – the soap bubbles of wealth / pleasure / power / fame / earthly glory - - - those things will vanish like a puff of smoke

Matthew 16:26 - 'for what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul?'

v. 12 - Jesus is Lord over all [both Jew and Greek – therefore He can save both]

MLJ: 'The whole world is still God's world. He is Lord of all. He is as much the Lord of the Gentile as He is of the Jew.'

Barriers to the gospel are not racial or cultural – but rather dependent upon the sinner’s attitude toward the gospel – one of reception or rejection

II. Whoever Calls - v. 13

Romans 10:13 - 'For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Christians are people who call upon the name of the Lord

J.C. Ryle: 'What is the first step of a Christian, but a crying out like Bartimaeus, 'Jesus - have mercy on me'?

The wicked are those who do not call upon the name of the Lord

Psalm 79:6 - 'Pour out Thy wrath upon the nations which do not know Thee, and upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Thy name'

Elijah confronted Ahaziah – the son of Ahab – an idolater and challenged him – ‘Is it because there is no god in Israel that you have gone to enquire of Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?’

Israel has a God – call upon Him – not Baal!

It's an insult – if our child looks to a neighbor to buy him some shoes or meet some basic need

We say – wait a minute – I am your father – that's my job - - - you don't have to go begging on the street – you have a father

If God is our God – we call upon Him

It begins with asking Jesus to save us

In the context – ‘Lord’ is a reference to Jesus

In our men's group – the topic came up: ‘should we pray to the Father or to Jesus – or both?’

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father – in the name of the Son

The Lord's Prayer – ‘Our Father . . .’

Paul's prayers are often addressed to the Father:

Ephesians 3:14 - 'For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father . . . that He would grant you . . .'

In Acts 7 – at the stoning of Stephen – we see Stephen calling on Jesus

Acts 7:55 - 'But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.'

Acts 7:60 - 'And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.'

The 2nd to last verse in the bible is a prayer to Jesus

Revelation 22:20 - 'He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen, come Lord Jesus.'

We see: It is appropriate to pray to Jesus – it's also appropriate to pray to the Father – consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity

The prayer of the Publican is a great gospel / salvation prayer

Luke 18:13 - 'But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

That is a salvation prayer – a calling upon the Lord - - - Jesus says that he went down to his house justified

When we call upon the Lord - we are asking for what God in His great compassion has promised to give us thru faith in Jesus Christ – [not what we deserve]

III. The Proclamation Goes Out - vv. 14-15

If people need to put their trust in Christ – and respond to the message of the gospel – then someone needs to take that message forth

This is a classic Missions passage – send the word

If people are saved by calling on the Lord Jesus – then we need to tell them to call on the Lord Jesus

We are reminded here – the church is not just a haphazard / arbitrary entity in this world

Jesus said – 'I will build My church'

Matthew 16:18 - 'And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.'

That was not just a statement of intent – but also a prophetic prediction – there will be a church in My Name – which was a stunning prediction of its own

Here we are as evidence of the truthfulness of this claim!

Jesus sent individuals out with the gospel – the apostles

Apostle = αποστολος = 'sent one'

The Apostles were sent – [to bear witness to the resurrection – they were eye-witnesses]

John 20:21 - 'Jesus therefore said to them again, ". . . as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' [kjb]

God is still in the act of sending

Timothy Keller: 'He may send us overseas, into the pulpit, or across the street to our neighbor.'

We might think of the commission to Isaiah

Isaiah 6:8 - 'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I. Here am I: send me.'

Paul emphasized the fact that he did not choose to become an apostle – but that God had chosen him for that task

In Acts 9 – Jesus instructed the disciple Ananias to go and lay hands on Saul so that he could receive his sight – Ananias wasn't sure he should do that!

Acts 9:15 - 'But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.'

Then – it was Paul's job to be obedient to that call / task assigned to him by God

Our job is to be obedient to Christ in the opportunities for service and gospel witness which He gives to us

We all have a role – we all play a part

There is no calling on the name of the Lord without faith

There is no faith without hearing

No hearing without someone proclaiming

No proclaiming without sending

You and I are like the mailman – delivering a message from God Himself

This is what God says: – if you will humble yourself and repent / trust in Christ – believe God raised Him from the dead - - - you will be saved

C. Everett Koop was the Surgeon General under Ronald Reagan – and before that he served as the surgeon-in-chief at the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia

Koop shared a story from those early days – he said that working with a nurse who knows the way you think as a surgeon - and can anticipate your moves and needs is one of the most satisfying things about his job

Each Christmas – he would hang a sign over the door to the operating room that said: ‘Through these doors pass the most beautiful girls in the world.’

C. Everett Koop: ‘The nurses knew I wasn’t talking about superficial physical attraction. They knew I appreciated the beauty of all the things they did to make possible our success in the operating room.’

Romans 10:15 – also has a functional definition of beauty

How beautiful are the feet that bring good news

Our job is to make sure that everyone knows about this Savior – whom they are to call upon

The sending of missionaries / the training and sending of pastors / etc.

MLJ: ‘Here is the great charge of the foreign mission movement.’

Matthew 28:19-20 - ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’

Hudson Taylor told of a conversation he once had with one of the Ningpo who had come to Christ

‘How long have you known this good news in your country?’

‘We have known it a long time’ - - - ‘hundreds of years’ – said Taylor

‘Hundreds of years!’ exclaimed the ex-Buddhist leader, ‘and you never came to tell us!’

Then he added: ‘My father sought the truth’, ‘sought it long and died without finding it. Oh – why did you not come sooner?’ [Hudson Taylor, p.8]

Why did you not come sooner? – [that really impacted him]

The gospel is always an urgent matter

What about those who have never heard

Max Lucado: ‘God won’t hold anyone accountable for what He has not told them but neither will He let anyone live without telling him something.’

Rom 1 – all people know of God and are *without excuse* / they suppress the truth about God

God has written the law on the conscience of pagans – Rom. 2

Rom. 2:14-15 - 'When Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a Law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.'

All people know this is a moral universe – and that they are guilty before God – they need to hear of the Savior

The Apostle John referred to the power of the written word

John 20:31 - 'But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.'

Our job – may be to hand someone a Bible / support Bible translators

Conclusion

If we proclaim the true gospel – how people respond to us – becomes a reflection of how they respond to the Lord

Luke 10:16 - 'The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.'

Our job is to get the message right – to deliver the mail unaltered / untainted / unedited

John MacArthur: 'This, then is the gospel we are to proclaim: that Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, humbled Himself to die on our behalf. Thus He became the sinless sacrifice to pay the penalty of our guilt. He rose from the dead to declare with power that He is Lord over all, and He offers eternal life freely to sinners who will surrender to Him in humble, repentant faith. This gospel promises nothing to the haughty rebel, but for broken, penitent sinners, it graciously offers everything that pertains to life and godliness.'