

Romans 10: 1-15 How beautiful are your feet? 9th August 2026.

Prayer: Lord, may our faith in you be strengthened as we look at your word this morning. Lead and guide us by your Spirit. Amen.

How beautiful are your feet?

Our feet are probably not a part of our body that we would necessarily look at and consider beautiful! What does a beautiful foot look like? Not too big, not too small, not too wide, not too flat, nice long toes and nails for painting!

What would we consider good about our feet? That they can carry us well as we walk.

What is Paul talking about as he speaks of having beautiful feet? He is not referring to the physical aspects of the foot – but that they carry a messenger who brings good news! This is actually a quote of Paul's from Isaiah 52 v 7, where the prophet gives a message of hope that a messenger is coming to bring the good news of freedom from captivity to the Jews who were exiled in Babylon. In ancient times a messenger may have run many miles to bring good news; their feet would be dusty, dirty and tired – but the messengers were welcomed joyfully as they delivered good news.

So how beautiful are your feet? Are you a bearer of the wonderful news of the gospel, of freedom, of peace, of salvation for all who will listen and believe in Jesus?

Chapter 10 of Romans begins similarly to chapter 9 with Paul's heart's desire and prayer for his Israelite family to be saved. Last week we heard of his grief and anguish for them.

He testifies that they are indeed zealous for God, just as he had been, being circumcised, keeping the law, making sacrifices, holding to dietary restrictions, giving to the temple treasury. But in doing all this they were establishing their own righteousness; they were what we would call 'self-righteous'. "Look how good I am!"

Paul longs for them to understand God's righteousness in the person of Jesus Christ who he says is the culmination of the law.

Their righteousness was exclusive and nationalistic. While Israel was chosen as God's covenant people, God always intended for all nations to come into his family. He said to Abraham that he and his offspring would be a blessing to the nations. Non-Israelites were included in God's family. Think of Rahab, who protected the spies and Ruth a Moabite who married Boaz and became the great grandmother of King David.

God always planned that through Jesus all may be saved – adopted in his family by grace and through faith. Not by works, not by race, but by faith. And our righteousness, our right being with God, is only in Jesus, his death and resurrection.

As I commented last week, we, like the Israelites, need to be careful of falling into the trap of self-righteousness. Thinking we are saved, or that we are somehow better than others through our works, church attendance, or belief in a particular style of worship, music, liturgy, or even a particular bible translation!

Our righteousness, says Paul, is in Jesus, as we believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that he is Lord. He came down from heaven, and he went to the depths – died and rose again that we may be saved. He is near us now, present and accessible to all.

Paul is clear that Jesus is for all, that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, he expands on this in his letter to the Galatians 3:26, saying there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female. All equal in God's eyes.

It is not an outward sign like physical circumcision that mark you as one of God's children, but the circumcision of the heart says Paul earlier in this letter to the Romans (2:29). It is an internal spiritual transformation, a life that shows that Jesus is our Lord...not Ceasar, or Trump, not the money we have in the bank or anything else we may worship.

Paul says that as we believe in Jesus, we will not be put to shame (v 11). At the same time, we should not be ashamed of him but be confident in declaring our faith. In the very beginning of this letter (1:16) Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel; he has complete confidence in Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is the gospel message that he goes on to write about to the Romans (and now us) – the good news for all.

We need to confess, profess and live out our faith, showing others that Jesus is Lord of *our* lives. We don't always live like it. Perhaps we need a fresh encounter with the living Lord, to be awestruck by him again, or perhaps we need to turn away from making someone, or something else Lord over us.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved! (v 13)

In our gospel reading from Matthew 14 today, we see Peter testing to see if it is Jesus, his Lord, walking on the water and say's *Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water.*

Jesus says *come*. Peter starts off well but then looks at the wind and waves and begins to sink. Rather than let him drown, when Peter calls out *Lord, save me!* Jesus reaches out his hand to rescue him. *All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

When Jesus steps onto the boat the wind and waves die down and the other disciples recognise that he is indeed Lord and worship him, confessing with their mouths, *Truly, you are the Son of God.*

Do we see Jesus for who is and truly believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths?

As Jesus longs for all to come to him, to call out to him to be saved and richly blessed by him, Paul challenges us with a few questions – are we willing to be bearers of the good news? We read in verses 14-15...

How can they call on the one they have not believed in?

And how can they believe in the one they have not heard?

And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?

Sometimes Jesus will reveal himself to those who haven't heard the truth about him. I've read books and heard testimonies of people of other faiths coming to faith in Jesus who has visited them in dreams or visions. Or someone coming to faith through picking up a Gideon's bible in a hotel room (sadly it is rare to find one these days) and meeting Jesus in the word.

But generally, people come to faith as they are introduced to Jesus through someone who shares with them, in words and actions. A family member, a friend, a colleague.

As he sent his disciples to go to all nations, so Jesus sends us to go out into our neighbourhoods.

Missionaries were sent to far flung places in the world to carry the gospel of good news. Sadly, they weren't always culturally sensitive, but most mission agencies are much more aware these days! Still the gospel went out. Today missionaries are sent out from many of those countries that people were sent to, like India and South Korea. They are sent to western countries who have become so secular they no longer hear the good news from their families or schools. The Church Missionary Society send missionaries from Australia to parts of Western Europe like Italy, France and Spain. Michael and I were however very encouraged by the numbers of young and old actively involved in their faith in Eastern Europe. There is certainly a resurgence among the Catholics as we witnessed with the thousands we saw on pilgrimage in Zagreb. A growth in Catholicism and Pentecostalism was also reported in the Australian newspaper last weekend. The new Pope is inspiring people as he shares a message of God's compassion for the world.

We need local missionaries here!

Scripture Union still send people on mission over Summer to share the gospel message with young people and families. Here on the Island as you know, the SU Theos team are certainly not ashamed of the gospel as they hand out new testaments and wear their blue T-shirts that say *Jesus is Lord*.

Who will you share the good news with in your community?

I attended a police chaplain zoom meeting this week (Michael and I are volunteer police chaplains here in Cowes and San Remo). A retired policeman, of no faith background, was talking about PTSD, and shared what he valued about the chaplains. He valued them as people who were motivated by their faith to volunteer, to listen while being non-judgemental, people full of kindness and compassion, willing to walk alongside others in pain. That sounds like people who are like Jesus.

Will you use your beautiful feet to bring Jesus close to others? Confessing him with your mouth, and showing him in your actions, your love, your patience, your kindness, your love and compassion.

How will they meet Jesus if we don't introduce him? They may not hear about him from anyone else...

I'll finish with the full verse from Isaiah 52 v 7, may we be inspired to be bearers of good tidings...

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say,
"Your God reigns!"

Let's pray:

Jesus, I pray that we may truly believe in you in our hearts, confess with our mouths and live out in our lives, that you are Lord. You are the one we can put our hope and trust in, for as we call out to you, you rescue and save us. Lord, we pray for those yet to hear of and meet you. We pray for all missionaries who are especially commissioned and sent to bring the gospel to people in all places. But I pray you will also move us by your Spirit to share our faith in you with others, our families, friends and our neighbours. May we have beautiful feet proclaiming peace, that you reign in earth and heaven and that your love and salvation is for all people. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.