DATE: **November 21, 2026**
SERIES: **The Gospel Is**
MESSAGE: **A Gift**
PASSAGE: **Romans 10:10-17**
SPEAKER: **Jacob Erb**

Well, good evening, everyone. My name's Jacob Erb and I'm the outreach pastor here. And I just wanted to start this morning, or this evening, with a question: Who gave you the gospel? Was it a single conversation or was it more a series of events? Who helped you here?

Now, I grew up in the church with parents who loved Jesus and grandparents who modeled faith. I knew all the Bible stories. I sang in the Christmas concert. We prayed before every meal. The gospel was always around me. I heard it. I was taught it, and I saw it every day. And yet somehow, I didn't really get it.

Now, I was a bit of a stubborn child. My father liked to describe me as a bull in a China hutch, and I don't actually know if I knew what he really meant, but I do know that I often had to learn things the hard way. I spent most of my childhood being pretty hard to teach in breaking most of the rules. And that continued into college and beyond where I often chose the harder path, doing what I knew, from how I was raised, I probably shouldn't.

And all of that ultimately led to failure. The facade of my life was torn back, and what remained was me, broken, and embarrassed. And so, rather than face my mistakes, I ran away, I got on the internet, I filled out some forms, and six months later, I moved to South Korea, because that's what everyone does when they fail, right? They move halfway across the world. And it was there, though, that I heard the gospel for the first time. Not that I hadn't been told, not that I hadn't seen it, but it was the first time that I really heard it.

As you can imagine, running away didn't solve my problems like I hoped it might. The core issues of why my life had fallen apart were still there. And so, in downtown Seoul in a basement church, I was looking for answers. And I don't remember the sermon title. I don't remember the text or even the pastor's name, but I do remember his question because it changed my life. The pastor said, "Is what you're doing advancing the kingdom of heaven?" And I remember thinking, I didn't know that God had a kingdom, I didn't know I had any part in advancing it.

But then he followed it up with a simpler question. He said, "Who are you living for? Are you living for yourself? Or are you living for Jesus?" And that, now that hit me like a ton of bricks. Not because it was so profound, but because I didn't like the answer. You know, up until that point in my life, I had only lived for myself. I had oriented my entire life around me. What I want, when I want it, at whatever cost to whomever. I was convicted in that moment through that question, and that changed everything.

Shortly thereafter, I changed my ways. I turned from what I used to be, and I sought to follow Jesus. And what began with that simple question, I took that as a grid, and I was like, okay, in the big decisions and the small decisions, Jacob, who is this for? Is it for you? Or is it for Jesus? And I didn't always get it right. Sometimes I got it really wrong, and I had to go back and clean it up.

But looking back now, I realized something: Someone gave me the gospel. My parents, my grandparents, those Sunday school teachers, that pastor in the basement in Seoul. The problem wasn't that God wasn't speaking. The problem was I wasn't listening. You know, somebody gave me the gospel and that, that changed my life.

Now, your story, your details, are probably a little bit different than mine, but God has a pretty remarkably consistent pattern. He pursues people. And he often uses regular people to pursue us. Somewhere along the way, someone helped us all here. And that's what Paul is talking about in Romans 10. So we want to look at a passage that we've already covered. Ryan has already taught us on Romans 10, and we're looking at Romans 10, starting in verse 10, going through verse 17.

When Ryan walked us through this passage, he helped us understand the original intent, what Paul was really talking about here was the unbelief of Israel, right? His argument was that the gospel had been made known. The message went out, it was clear, and so Israel could not use that as an excuse for not believing in Jesus.

But Ryan also pointed out that there is a missional principle here that we can't miss: People cannot believe in something that they've never heard. And so someone has to tell them. And that's what I want to spend some time exploring today. If you do have a Bible, we're going to start at verse 10. It says:

> *10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." 12 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; 13 for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

You know, Paul's talking about the availability of salvation. And look how inclusive he is. What does he say? It's whoever believes, right? No distinction between Jew or Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

You know, God's ultimate desire, has never been a single people or a single nation or select few. From the very beginning, God's heart has always been for all nations, for all people. In fact, we can see that all the way back in Genesis, right? Genesis chapter 12. God calls Abraham, why? God calls Abraham, and what does he say? He says, Abraham, I'm gonna bless you. And you will be a blessing. In fact, God goes on and says in you, Abraham, all of the families of the earth shall be blessed. Right? The blessing of the Lord was never meant to stop with Abraham. It was meant to flow through him.

The same is true when we look at the nation of Israel. God gave them his promises. He gave them his covenant. He gave him his very presence with them so that not that they could keep him to himself. It's actually in that all the nations would see his glory, yhey would see his mighty deeds, and they would know his name.

And the same continues for our church today. God has given us so many blessings. Chief among them is the gospel, right? We were once far from God, but brought near through Christ. We were once dead in our sins, but now we're made alive in Jesus. We were once enemies with God, and now we are sons and daughters. God's blessings are not meant to stop with us, not with his people. They're meant to flow through them, right?

We're not supposed to be like a reservoir, storing up all of these beautiful blessings that God has given us. Rather, we're supposed to be a river, right? The blessings are supposed to flow through us. And as it flows through us, it produces flourishing in all the areas around us.

And it's important that we know the motivation here. It's not, it's not guilt or obligation, it's love. Love is what compels us. Sharing the gospel isn't just a box to check when we love someone. We want what's good for them, right? We want what's good for them. And if we believe that the gospel truly is the best thing that we have, well, boy, it's the loving thing to give that away.

Last week, we heard stories from our South Asia brothers sharing about the power of the gospel for salvation. And we didn't have time for all the stories, but there's one that I think is worth mentioning here. We have a leader in a rural, mountainous area. Who regularly walks for three days through the wilderness to share with the most remote villages in his area. Who does that? Walk for three days? Like, what compels someone to go to such extraordinary lengths? Surely, he understands the

gift that the gospel is. Like, surely he understands what he is bringing and what the need is for that.

And he believed in the value of the gospel in a way that sometimes I wonder, do I believe that? Do I understand the gift that I've been given? And when I hear stories like that, it does remind me that the best thing that I've ever been given is Jesus. And if that's true, then the most loving thing that I can do is then give Jesus away to others too. Paul continues here in verse 14, and he says:

> *14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him who they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 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!"*

Before someone can believe, they have to hear. And if they're gonna hear, we've got to tell them. People need someone to tell them the good news of Jesus. And when Paul says preach here, he's not talking about someone standing up on stage. He's talking about everyday conversation, sharing the reality of Jesus. Right?

Go back to that very first question. Who gave you the gospel? How did God get the gospel to you? Surely someone told you. Surely someone taught you, shared their story, prayed for you. Every believer is actually the result of someone else's faithfulness. Do you get that? Every believer, we're here because someone else faithfully told us. And God often uses ordinary men and women, brothers and sisters, family and friends, to share the good news with those around us.

And when we talk about sharing the gospel or evangelism, sometimes, you know, that might cause some different feelings for people. Sometimes we think about that and we feel a pressure that we have to have a convincing argument.

Maybe we feel a little fearful we're going to have an awkward conversation, or maybe just we really want to get all the answers right so that we can be more effective. But I really think that sharing who Jesus is, helping people here, is a little bit more simple than that.

Just tell people what Jesus did for you. Teach them whatever it is that you know and to the best of your ability, live like the gospel is true. The goal isn't to be an expert or impressive. The goal is to just bear witness to how Jesus has changed your life. And Paul concludes here in verse 16:

> *16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

Faith comes from hearing, right? Faith doesn't come from perfect Christians. Faith doesn't come from perfect presentations or convincing arguments. Faith comes from hearing. And that, honestly, that should be incredibly freeing because it's not my job to convert people. Only the Lord can change people's hearts. My job is to just tell people what Jesus has done.

And not everyone is going to believe, but they certainly can't believe if they've never heard the message, right? At some point, people need to hear. Some people need to hear again and again. They need to hear who he is. They need to hear what he's done and they need to know what it looks like to follow him. We don't have to control the outcomes. We can leave that to God.

Because someone told me. And that changed everything. That single moment in that basement was built on a foundation of people continually, faithfully sharing with me. And that simple question that I ask myself—who is this for, me or Jesus?—gradually became the thing that helped shape my life. I found that finding and following Jesus is a lot less dramatic than I think it is sometimes. Most times it really, honestly, is just doing the simple, next right thing. I don't need the 10 year plan. I just need to take one more faithful step.

Actually, ten years ago, on a weekend, an outreach weekend just like this, I sat up there in the top of section 10. And Ryan stood right here, and he was sharing a message similar to this. And he said something to the fact of, "Sometimes we just need people who are willing to go wherever Jesus may be calling." And I thought, I'll do it. Maybe I could be useful there. Maybe that could be my next step.

I sent Ryan a email later that, later that night. And I thought, hey, maybe God is calling me to be a missionary. So I met with him. Now, Ryan graciously told me that my willing spirit was great, but I didn't know anything about the Bible. He told me I needed some biblical training. So that was the next step. He told me and helped me find some other areas which I needed to grow in, and that was a step. Oftentimes I needed encouragement. And maybe, on occasion, some correction and some encouragement for humility.

Well, I never became a missionary, at least not yet. And over the course of years, as I sought to take the next right step, God didn't lead me to the mission field. He led me into the foster care world. First, as a state worker investigating child abuse and neglect, but then ultimately, as a foster parent. And I don't share that because I think I have figured out how this all works. But when we say yes to Jesus, it doesn't come with an assured ten-year plan, though I wish it did—it usually is just the next right step.

And sometimes that does require obedience, sometimes that requires sacrifice. And why I share that is, I can see how over the years God has continually used ordinary steps of obedience to lead me somewhere that I would have never planned to go myself. And honestly, as I've been a believer, as I've given my life to Jesus, It hasn't always been easy. It's not been sunshine and rainbows. Some of this has been very hard, particularly foster care.

But harder circumstances don't mean God is less faithful. In fact, sometimes the clearest examples of his faithfulness come in the hardest of moments. Foster care pushed my wife and I beyond the limits that I thought were even imaginable. It involved great heartache and frustration and grievous loss. But God has been faithful to us through that.

And I still remember the first day I saw my children's faces, those little faces. And I thought, I don't know what's gonna happen, but they're worth it. And love has a funny way of making sacrifice feel worthwhile. And I knew they were worth it. And following Jesus can feel that way. There's been moments in my life where obedience is costly and where I wasn't sure if I even could do the next right thing. And it was risky and uncomfortable, and yet I look back and I never regret that. Never regret following Jesus.

You know, sometimes we feel like following Jesus requires something dramatic. We think, oh, if God wants to use me, I need to quit my job, I need to move to a foreign country, I need to shake things up. And sometimes that's true. Later today, we get to commission some missionaries that are going. But often, for most people, it's a lot less dramatic. It's simply taking the next right faithful step.

What if that next right step isn't somewhere else? What if it's right where Jesus has you? What if Jesus has you exactly where he wants you right now? In the midst of whatever you are going through, what if Jesus wants to use you there? We've just got to pay attention sometimes. Maybe the next right step actually isn't adding a whole bunch of new things to your list. It's just being intentional with what God has already given you. Because when we slow down, we might see what God has put in front of us.

So, what is your next right step? Paul says, how are they to believe in him who they have not heard? Well, someone helped us here. And someone shared the greatest blessing with us that they had ever received. Because they loved us enough to do so. And now, God has placed people in our lives that he loves—not as projects, not as assignments, but as people that he loves.

You know, because the gospel came to us, because someone took their next right step, the gospel will continue to reach people when we take ours. So, what is your

next right step? And who has Jesus put in your life that needs to hear about him? Will you pray with me?

God, thank you. Thank you for what you've given us, Father, the blessings that we've received. Thank you for the forgiveness that we have in you, in new life, Father. God, we pray for the people in this room, that you would make clear to them how you're moving in their life. The decisions we make, God, help us, help us align them to you. Align us to your will, Father, because you're good and you love us and you love people, Father. And so we thank you for this. We thank you for the gift of the gospel. And we thank you for the people that you've put in our lives. And we pray all of these things, Father, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

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