

**Beautiful Gospel Feet
Romans 10:9 – 15**

Big Idea – Every born-again Christ follower should have beautiful feet.

Amy Tracy was raised in a dysfunctional home that focused on performance. Amy bloomed in high school as a cross country runner, and her dad was a typical sports obsessed father, who constantly prodded her to perform. When she stopped winning races, her family grew disappointed with her, and she began to grow depressed.

In college Amy got into drugs and alcohol, and her junior year she developed a kinship with several professors who she knew were gay. She was drawn to their sense of community, and ultimately Amy concluded that she was gay. Soon afterward, Amy committed her life to women's rights, and she became actively involved in the pro-abortion movement.

Yet there were times Amy was filled with a profound sense of emptiness and sadness, a longing for peace and joy that she didn't find in the way she was living her life. As she looked at the Christians who marched against her in abortion demonstrations, all she saw was anger and hatred.

In Amy's words, "Christians lived down to my low expectations." Yet Amy started feeling like she was falling apart, and she concluded that her emptiness was a hunger for God himself. By now Amy had become the press secretary for the National Organization for Women. One night in Washington, D.C. Amy ran into a pro-life activist she had seen at several abortion demonstrations. She made a sarcastic remark, expecting him to respond the same way. But instead, he said, "Amy, all I pray for is the chance to see you standing in church, praising and loving Jesus. Forget the abortion debate. That's all I really want."

Her hunger for God grew desperate, and finally she looked in the yellow pages for a Christian church. One Sunday she showed up, her pick-up truck covered with rainbow flags and pro-abortion stickers. Amy wondered if she'd be thrown out, yet as the pastor spoke and the church worshiped, she sensed God calling to her. It took a while, but eventually Amy committed her life to Jesus Christ. Today Amy is a writer for Focus on the Family in the area of public policy.

Amy says, "My prayer is that Christians will be able to see others with compassion, not as enemies; as broken and in need of good news and restoration by the only healer of our souls, Jesus Christ."

The word "gospel" in the Bible is the good news about Jesus Christ.

1. Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord with your mouth results in salvation – vs. 9

Romans 10:9 "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."

Matthew 1:21b "You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Luke 1:77 says Jesus came, "To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission, the forgiveness of their sins."

What is salvation?

Salvation to sinners is being rescued from their sins and the resulting consequences of sin, which is spiritual death (Romans 6:23a), or eternity in the flames of hell.

This salvation comes through the "remission" or forgiveness of our sins. Just as the result of sin is spiritual death, the result of our faith in Jesus is spiritual life, for when we call upon Jesus we receive salvation for our souls.

2. Believing in your heart and mind – vs. 10

Romans 10:10 "For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved."

11 "Whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed."

Romans 1:16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

1 Peter 1:8-9 "Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls."

3. Trusting by faith in God's Word

Ephesians 2:8, 9 “For by grace you are saved through faith and not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works so no one can boast.”

1 Peter 1:23 “For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.

24 As the Scriptures say, “People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fades.

25 But the word of the Lord remains forever.” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.”

Psalm 19:7 -11

4. All nations and peoples are welcome – vs. 12

Romans 10:12 “That Scripture says “anyone“ because there is no difference between those who are Jews and those who are not. The same Lord is the Lord of all and gives many blessings to all who trust in him,

13 as the Scripture says, “Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved.“

1 Timothy 2:3-4 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

1 John 2:2 “He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.”

5. How?

people are not going to automatically decide to call out to God.

Romans 10:14 “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

Many people realize there is something missing in their lives; something beyond their control—something they can't put their finger on. Many realize that they need God but that is about it.

Unless someone tells them what they have to do, they will never be saved.

Evangelism is one of the purposes of the church.

It means we share the good news of Jesus with those around us and around the world.

Why is it so important that we take this command to share with others seriously?

- Because apart from Christ there is no hope.
Ephesians 2:12 says that people without God have “no hope”
- This is the primary way God uses to get his message throughout the world

Before He left the earth Jesus told His followers repeatedly they were to give out the good news of the gospel to everyone, everywhere.

(Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8)

Evangelism is sharing the good news about Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is not:

- It's not just living a good Christian life so the world can see.

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world...”

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine...that they will see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.”

People need more than just seeing you live a good life. They will not know Who your Father is unless you tell them.

There has to come a point in time where you have to say something and give the reason for the hope that you possess.

1 Peter 3:15 “...be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you about the hope you have within you...”

- It's not telling them about your church – you might use the question, “Do you go to church anywhere? as a discussion starter to get people talking about spiritual things. It's not wrong to tell people what's happening at your church. We need to keep in mind that people do not call upon the church to save them but Christ.

Let's read our text again:

“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about

him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” Romans 10:14-15

In order for someone to call upon the Lord they must first believe. And in order to believe one must first hear the message. And in order for someone to hear there has to be someone to tell them.

So why doesn't God just make everyone when they are born call out to God so everyone can be saved? God has given each and everyone of us a precious gift—that is the gift of free choice. God delighted in us so much that we were made differently. God made us to not to live by instinct as animals do but by giving us a conscious and equipping us with the capability of deciding for ourselves whether we will make a certain choice or not. God has left no surprises for us. He has given us all the information we need to rationally choose whether we will accept or reject him. It's your choice. We must keep in mind that there are tremendous implications and consequences in making a decision for or against Christ.

Some believers say “evangelism is not my gift!”

2 Corinthians 5:20 “So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”

Many followers of Christ have a tendency to believe that if they don't have the gift of evangelism they are not responsible for sharing. I want you to know today that it is God's purpose that every believer help get others into heaven. Every person becomes a candidate to be sent to tell the good news. I don't mean when you become a follower of Christ you immediately sign up to go to a foreign land but you are now in a position to be used where you are to bring the message to others.

I believe that being sent means that you will become as prepared as possible to share the good news with others. As I skimmed through Matthew, Mark and Luke this week I have found some interesting facts. Before Jesus actually sent his 12 disciples out on their own he spent time with them, he taught them. Before he sent them out he gave them authority and gave them specific instructions.

Now there were also times after he healed someone that he told him to go home and specifically tell his family what God has done for him that day.

I believe that Jesus not only wants us to be able to share what God has done in our own lives (experiences) but also why Jesus is the only way. Why he is the only one able to save. Why it is logical to trust in Jesus.

That only comes by an effort to search the scriptures, to know what is going on in the world today, to know what other people believe. Many people don't take the time to learn theology because they think they can just send them to the preacher.

It's our goal as a church to help equip you to share your faith. So, you can answer statements like, "The Bible is full of divinely approved violence to children" and many other statements that Biblical opponents throw at those of us who love the Bible.

Notice again verse 15.

Paul uses an interesting Old Testament quotation in verse 15: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news." This verse was first used in Isaiah. It is also used in Nahum. It's important to understand that in Biblical times they didn't have email or fax machines or phones.

So in order for a person or king to relay a message to his hearers they sent messengers, often time they would travel by foot. Many times these messengers would travel miles to get the message to his hearer. Now, the message the messenger was bringing could be either positive or good.

For instance, in Job it was a messenger that brought word to Job that his family was killed. So, can you imagine what people and communities would be thinking when word got out a messenger was bringing word to them? Their hearts would pound not knowing if the news was going to be tragic or good.

When the news was good of course the messenger was the most popular person around. I mean I would probably not like this job. People would either love you or hate you! So people would say the messenger's feet were beautiful. Now the word beautiful does not mean in appearance—thank goodness. It means "in time" or "timely". It was as if the people were saying, "just when I needed to hear something good."

There are people all around us in desperate need of some good news. They are going through a trying time. They don't need to hear "suck it up" or "hang in there" or "our church has great music", they need to hear Jesus loves and cares for them.

Did you know that most people come to Christ (or are more eager to receive the gospel) during turning points or transitions in their lives? Either a move, a death in the family, a divorce, and birth of a child. When things are going really great for an unbeliever it's harder for them to be open to their need. But boy when the rug is ripped out from under them they become open.

So, you can see Paul's imagery here. Someone going through a tough time in need of some good news: The reply is "how timely was this in getting to me!"

When is the last time someone said to you, "how beautiful are your feet"? What are you doing to bring the good news to the people around you in your daily life? Are you willing to be as prepared as possible to be an effective witness?

There was a peculiar fisherman from Minnesota who was very well prepared. He knew how to fish. He had everything you need to be a good fisherman. He had poles, nets, bait, and even a really nice boat, but this fisherman had a problem. You see, for all his preparation he never caught anything. Not one fish. Not one, not ever. And you know why he never caught a fish? What do you think? The answer is easy: He never went fishing. He had all the knowledge and all the equipment, but he never got into the boat, he never left the dock..

Paul Little in his book "How to Give Away Your Faith" defines witnessing: "Witnessing is that deep-seated conviction that the greatest favor I can do for others is to introduce them to Jesus Christ."

This truth must hit every single devoted follower of Christ. This truth must hit our Life Groups, our youth group, our children's ministry, our softball team...this truth must permeate our church. Oh God, give us a fire in our hearts to bring the good news!

I want to close with this story by missionary Doug Nichols, Bothell, WA who tells this story:

"While serving with Operation Mobilization in India in 1967, tuberculosis forced me into a sanitarium for several months. I did not yet speak the language, but I tried to give Christian literature written in their language to the patients, doctors, and nurses. Everyone politely refused. I sensed many weren't happy about a rich American (to them all Americans are rich) being in a free, government-run sanitarium. (They didn't know I was just as broke as they were!)

The first few nights I woke around 2:00 A.M. coughing. One morning during my coughing spell, I noticed one of the older and sicker patients across the aisle trying to get out of bed. He would sit up on the edge of the bed and try to stand, but in weakness would fall back into bed.

I didn't understand what he was trying to do. He finally fell back into bed exhausted. I heard him crying softly.

The next morning I realized what the man had been trying to do. He had been trying to get up and walk to the bathroom! The stench in our ward was awful. Other patients

yelled insults at the man. Angry nurses moved him roughly from side to side as they cleaned up the mess. One nurse even slapped him. The old man curled into a ball and wept.

The next night I again woke up coughing. I noticed the man across the aisle sit up and again try to stand. Like the night before, he fell back whimpering.

I don't like bad smells, and I didn't want to become involved, but I got out of bed and went over to him. When I touched his shoulder, his eyes opened wide with fear. I smiled, put my arms under him, and picked him up. He was very light due to old age and advanced TB. I carried him to the washroom, which was just a filthy, small room with a hole in the floor. I stood behind him with my arms under his armpits as he took care of himself. After he finished, I picked him up, and carried him back to his bed. As I laid him down, he kissed me on the cheek, smiled, and said something I couldn't understand.

The next morning another patient woke me and handed me a steaming cup of tea. He motioned with his hands that he wanted a tract. As the sun rose, other patients approached and indicated they also wanted the booklets I had tried to distribute before. Throughout the day nurses, interns, and doctors asked for literature.

Weeks later an evangelist who spoke the language visited me, and as he talked to others he discovered that several had put their trust in Christ as Savior as a result of reading the literature.

What did it take to reach these people with the gospel? It wasn't health, the ability to speak their language, or a persuasive talk. I simply took a trip to the bathroom.

What won these people was the fact, that when he walked, he walked like Jesus. "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news."

Easter is just three weeks away – will you ask God to help you share with your friends and neighbors the good news that Jesus conquered death and wants to help them do it too?!!