

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL | ROMANS SERIES | WEEK 4

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL NATIONS

Romans 9–11 - God's Heart for Those Outside
Ben Humphrys | Sunday 5 July 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Key Verse

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." - Romans 10:13

Introduction - Paul's Unfinished Question

At the start of Romans, Paul quoted the prophet Habakkuk: the just shall live by faith. That is almost a summary for the whole book. The just - those made righteous by faith. The live - the life we now live as a result. Chapters 9-11 pause before moving on to ask a question Paul has left unanswered.

Paul is saved by the grace of God - but his friends, family, and loved ones, his own Jewish people, are not. As apostle to the Gentiles, he is watching God's mercy poured out to strangers while his own people are not moving forward. This is deeply personal. And it raises a question that goes to the heart of God's faithfulness:

If God hasn't honoured his word to Israel, then all of God's promises are in trouble.

Paul's answer: God has not abandoned anyone. His promises were always intended to reach all nations. He hasn't cast away the Jews - and the promises of God were always meant to extend to every people on earth.

Romans 10:13 *For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

These three chapters cover three main points: the urgency of the gospel, the reach of the gospel, and the mercy of the gospel.

POINT 1
URGENCY

We are in the final race

POINT 2
REACH

Only God can reach into hearts

POINT 3
MERCY

Turn mystery into revelation

POINT 1 | The Urgency of the Gospel

Paul didn't plant the church in Rome - it most likely started when Jewish Christians returned from the day of Pentecost. Paul's plan was to use Rome as a home base to take the gospel to Spain - further than it had ever gone. But there was a division in the church between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and Paul had to clarify that God's plan had always included both.

Romans 9:6 *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.*

Paul explains the distinction: there is ethnic Israel (Abraham's physical descendants) and spiritual Israel (those who have faith in Jesus). Not all of ethnic Israel has believed in Jesus yet - but God is still being faithful to his Old Testament promises. God's plan has always been to include all people.

One third of all of Paul's Old Testament quotes across his letters are found in these three chapters. He shows through examples like Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, that Old Testament prophecies always included God working through unexpected people. Now Jesus is the chosen one to carry the promise of salvation for everyone.

Romans 10:4 *Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

The word culmination or fulfilment means the end or the goal. Jesus is what the law has always been leading towards.

The Final Race

Think of the running races at the Olympics. Each heat leads to the next. You have to qualify in each stage to move on until you arrive at the grand final race. Paul is placing us in salvation history - we are in the grand final race. The semifinals are finished. We have started the final race. And in the future will be a grand final celebration. But God is still holding open the starting gates for others to join in.

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Our role is to jump over the fence and reach the crowd - or better, to tear the fence down and remove the barriers, because they are the people we need to reach. An evangelist is a messenger and proclaimer of good news - someone who goes out of their way to bring others in. The urgency is this: we need to get as many people as we can running the race.

Reflect: *We are in the final race. Jesus is God's final word on salvation. What barriers - religious, social, relational - might you be able to tear down to help someone else join in?*

POINT 2 | The Reach of the Gospel

Back in the courtroom. Paul is arguing in defence of God's faithfulness to all people. The Jews argue the prosecution. The Gentiles watch from the gallery. Paul calls three Old Testament witnesses.

The Three Witnesses

- Isaiah (Isaiah 28) - 'Whoever believes will not be put to shame' - that phrase means to be saved
- Joel (Joel 2:32) - 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'
- Moses (Deuteronomy 30) - 'The word is very near you - it is in your mouth and in your heart'

Paul seizes on Moses' point. It's in your heart. You don't have to try and reach up to heaven - God is not looking for religious perfection. And you don't have to resurrect yourself out of your own problems - Jesus has already risen from the grave. Only the gospel can reach into people's hearts and do a miracle in their life.

Romans 10:14–15 *How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*

Paul's personal pain is that his own people had stopped listening. But he is not giving up on them - and he is not watering down the mandate for all of us to carry the good news as far and wide as we can.

Beautiful Feet

When Paul talks about a messenger, their feet would have been filthy from travelling over mountains. What matters is not how polished we are, but the message we carry. What will bless the one person on your list is the good news about Jesus - that they don't have to try and reach up to heaven, that they don't have to lift themselves out of their own struggles. Jesus has already risen from the grave.

When we bring a message of hope in the middle of our own struggle, that message will carry further than anything you could ever imagine.

Being real and authentic - not always pretty - is what makes the gospel go further. Jesus is standing with arms open wide for all who call on his name.

Reflect: *How can you help the gospel reach further - not by being perfect, but by being authentic? The person on your list who is trying to reach up to heaven by living a good life,*

trying to lift themselves out of their trouble: what can you do practically to love them and pray that God reaches into their heart?

POINT 3 | The Mercy of the Gospel

Luke 5:32 *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Paul could never forget the grace and mercy of God in his own life. He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man. He is not teaching theory about Jesus - it is his real life experience. And that is the message of Romans: it is not about trying to become a better person. It is about the grace and mercy of God reaching out to people who don't deserve it.

1 Timothy 1:14 *The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

The word abundantly - in the Greek, the root of our word hyper - means over and above and beyond. Like a flooding river that reaches out past the boundaries of its banks. Paul's testimony speaks of God's abundant mercy for those outside. And Paul's logic: if he can be saved, then anyone can be saved.

Romans 11:1 *I ask then: did God reject his people? By no means!*

God hasn't rejected his people. There is a remnant of Jews who believe in Jesus. And God in his mercy is waiting patiently, holding the door open for the fullness of all people to be saved.

Turning Mystery into Revelation

When the Roman soldiers were nailing Jesus to the cross, he said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' They didn't know what they were doing. And that is the challenge for us: to turn the mystery into revelation - for the person we are praying for, how can we help what seems like a mystery to them become a revelation of knowing Jesus? That Jesus took our place on the cross.

Reflect: *How has the mercy of God been shown to you in your own life? And how can you show that same mercy to others - without judgment, with forgiveness, with generosity? Those who have been shown mercy are called to show mercy.*

Three Takeaways

1. Tear the fence down. How can you remove the barriers for others to run the race? What religious or cultural barriers could be broken down to help people see the real Jesus?

2. Be authentic. How can you be real in your life in a way that carries the gospel further? Loving people practically with the love God has shown you - praying that God reaches into their hearts.

3. Show mercy. How can you see the river of God's mercy flood into the lives of people who don't know him? The way you live, the way you forgive, the way you don't judge - these things show mercy.

The One Name - Series Reminder

At the start of this series, Pastor Andrew asked each of us to write down one name - one person we know who doesn't yet know Christ - and pray for them every day for 35 days:

- Lord, draw them to yourself
- Lord, prepare their heart to hear
- Lord, use me - or someone - to tell them

Ben shared that his person rang him during the week, looking for practical help. He went the extra mile and offered more help. He knows there is pain in their heart, that they are trying to reach up to heaven by living a good life, trying to lift themselves out of their trouble. He is praying and helping - and trusting God to reach into their heart.

Keep praying. Keep going. The reach of the gospel is in God's hands - but the beautiful feet are ours.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Ben described Paul's personal anguish - seeing strangers receive God's mercy while his own loved ones remained outside. Is there someone close to you who is still outside of faith? How does that feel? And how does it shape your urgency to share the gospel?

2. Paul says we are in the 'final race' of salvation history - the grand final, not the heats. Does that urgency feel real to you day to day? What would change if it did?

3. The five questions in Romans 10:14-15 are about the chain of sending - how can they hear without someone telling them? Where do you sit in that chain for the person on your list?

4. Ben said being real and authentic - not always pretty - is what makes the gospel go further. What would authentic, unpolished witness look like for you in your specific context this week?

5. Moses said the word is very near you - in your mouth and in your heart. Is the gospel in your heart in a way that comes out naturally, or does it feel distant and abstract? What would it take to make it feel close and alive again?

6. Paul said the mercy God poured on him was hyper - over and above and beyond. Can you think of a specific moment when God's mercy in your own life was hyper? And how could sharing that story turn mystery into revelation for someone else?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Romans 9:6 - Not all descended from Israel are Israel
- Romans 10:4 - Christ is the culmination of the law
- Romans 10:13 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved
- Romans 10:14–15 - How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news
- Romans 11:1 - God has not rejected his people
- Matthew 24:14 - The gospel preached to all nations, then the end will come
- Luke 5:32 - I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners
- 1 Timothy 1:14 - Grace poured out abundantly

Series Tracker

- Week 1 ✓ The Gospel We Carry - Romans 1–3
- Week 2 ✓ Faith Alone - Romans 4–5
- Week 3 ✓ The Gospel That Transforms - Romans 5–8
- Week 4 ✓ The Gospel for All Nations - Romans 9–11 (THIS WEEK)
- Week 5 Romans 12–16 (Final week - to be confirmed)

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