

The Message

Paul Revere, a patriot alongside John Adams, Samuel Adams and John Hancock in the cause of the American Revolution, received vital information one night about the British army's plans to attack the colonial militia. He and two other riders set out through the darkness to warn rebel commanders of the impending attack. Some who heard the news took up their weapons and joined in battle against the British troops. Others, loyal to the King of England, rejected the message and wanted the British army to succeed in putting down this rebellion. Still others stood by and watched, choosing not to take sides.

Long ago, there was another man named Paul. He also had a vital message and, like the American colonists, some of his listeners took the message to heart while others did not. Let's take a look as Paul explains God's plan to bring that message to those who will listen.

Monday – Messengers

"Evangelism is not a professional job for a few trained men, but is instead the unrelenting responsibility of every person who belongs to the company of Jesus." Elton Trueblood, 20th c. Quaker theologian

1. Please read Romans 10:12-16. What is Paul's point in verses 13-15? What is his concern in vs. 12 & 16?
2. In Acts 13:1-12, Paul had his own experience in being sent out. Who sent him? Now look closely at verses 5, 8 and 12. To whom did Paul and Barnabas first bring the message, who rejected it, and who believed it?

Text Insight: The proconsul, a Gentile, ruled Paphos in the name of the Roman Emperor.

3. Read Isaiah 52:7. Why does Paul quote this Old Testament verse in Romans 10 and what does it mean?

Making it Personal: What is your role: going out with God's word (like Paul and Barnabas), or supporting those who do (like the Christians in Antioch)? Pray for God's guidance in pursuing one or both roles.

Tuesday – The Word

"God is not silent. It is the nature of God to speak. The second person of the Holy Trinity is called 'The Word.'" A.W. Tozer, 20th c. American pastor and writer

1. Please read Romans 10:17. What does Paul seem to be saying here? How does Paul relate the message (about Jesus), the word of Christ, and "hearing"?
2. Paul undoubtedly had Romans 10:8 in mind when he wrote verse 17. How near is the word to us?
3. Read Matthew 4:1-11, a vivid account of Jesus and the word. Notice the nearness of the word. What emphasis does Jesus give to God's word? How is the power of the word displayed in this encounter of Christ with evil?

Prayer Focus: Many people reject God's word without another thought. Pray for God's messengers to be faithful in delivering the message (good news) of Jesus Christ, and not grow discouraged.

Wednesday – Voice to the Nations

"[H]uman beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it ... [but] they do not in fact behave in that way." C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

1. Please read Romans 10:18. What do you think Paul means that God's word has gone to all the earth?
2. What does Psalm 1 9:1-6 say about nature bearing witness to the existence and glory of God? Which particular qualities of God are identified in Romans 1:20 as being revealed in nature?
3. Look at the conclusion of Romans 1:20. No one has an excuse for not acknowledging the existence of God. What does Romans 1:21-23 say about those making excuses?

Prayer Focus: While people the world over can see God's eternal powerful and divine nature just by observing what he has created, not everyone has heard the rest of the story concerning Jesus Christ. Pray, asking God to raise up messengers to take this message to the ends of the earth.

Thursday – Acceptance/Rejection

"I am so weak that I can hardly write, I cannot read my Bible, I cannot even pray, I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child, and trust." Hudson Taylor, 19th c. missionary to China

1. Please read Romans 10:18-21. What question does Paul pose in verse 19? What answer do you discern in the quotes he uses from Isaiah and Moses?
2. Take a closer look at Deuteronomy 32:18-21 where we find God speaking of the nation of Israel. What had the people done?

Digging Deeper - See Matthew 11:16-19 and 12:38-40. Jesus calls the unbelieving Jews childish (11:16) as well as "wicked and adulterous" (12:39). Now read Matthew 23:37. How do these reactions of Jesus help us to understand the heart of God for his people Israel?

Friday – Those Who Did Not Seek

"Many who plan to seek God at the eleventh hour die at 10:30." Anonymous

1. Please read John 4:1-3. Do you think the Pharisees (the Jewish religious leaders) were in favor of Jesus' ministry or against it? How does John 2:12-18 help you understand their position?

Text Insight: The Pharisees trained their own disciples. They may have viewed Jesus as a competitor.

2. John 4:4-42 relates Jesus' encounter with a Gentile woman after this rejection by the Pharisees. What was the reaction of the woman (verses 28-29) and her neighbors (verses 39-42)? Why do you think the Samaritans accepted Jesus while the Pharisees did not?

3. Compare John 4:31-34 with Matthew 4:1-4 and John 1:1-5. Put Jesus' priorities in your own words.

Making it Personal: Are you most like the woman, her neighbors, the disciples or the Pharisees? Why?

For the Weekend: Read Romans 10:13-15, Matthew 28:16-20 and John 4:34-38, and consider your own role in carrying out Christ's commands. Pray for a willingness to follow wherever God leads you in this.