

Title: How beautiful!  
Date: June 5, 2022  
Subject: We gain happiness when we go with the good news of Jesus.  
Scripture: Romans 10:14, 15

Our oldest three granddaughters were getting their fingernails and toenails painted. Chloe, Sophie and Laynie sat still while their mom applied the colors. Laynie, a little over 2 1/2, was uber excited. And of course, our response to them had to be “Oh how beautiful!”

Dare I say that's not the normal spoken reaction when people look at someone else's feet, at least my feet. I've heard mine were made to not be seen. Feet are viewed as stink-a-toriums and for good reason. Our feet have 250,000 sweat glands. Some people think feet bacteria can be put to good use. The Irish discovered the bacteria that feed on dead skin of warm, sweaty feet can be used to make cheese. Apparently enough people were taken by the idea that in 2013 Dublin hosted a cheese exhibition.

By the way, the Guinness World Record for the most feet sniffed was set by Madeline Albrecht. In 15 years, as an employee of an Ohio lab that tests Dr Scholl's products, she sniffed more than 5,600 feet.

Feet. Beautiful feet

Read Romans 10:14, 15.

The quote in v. 15 is taken from the Old Testament book of Isaiah just prior to a description of the Supreme Servant with the familiar verses about Christ's crucifixion: “He was despised, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon, him by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4 - 5).

The designation of people having beautiful feet was for those who'd bring the good news of being released from Babylonian exile. It would come after Israel spent 70 years in captivity. The response would include shouting for joy and the whole world would see the salvation God would bring (Isaiah 52:8 - 10).

“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 to Zion “Your God reigns!”” (Isaiah 52:7).

This Hebrew word for *beautiful* has nothing to do with appearance. It means suitable, appropriate, used as designed. It's like when the final touch is made to a restored car and the engine purrs. Beautiful.

Back in Romans 10 is a shortened version of Isaiah's words. They're applied to the salvation message of Jesus Christ. The original Greek for *beautiful* describes "that which is seasonable, produced at the right time," as of the prime of life, or the time when anything is at its loveliest and best (Vine's Expository Dictionary). It's like The A-TEAM's Hannibal Smith's reaction of loving it when a plan comes together – beautiful.

Those who proclaim the good news of Jesus have beautiful feet. The process of salvation is outlined in vv. 14 and 15. We can take the questions and phrase them as statement. By working backwards we find there needs to be someone who is sent by God. The preacher needs to preach, to proclaim the message. Another

person needs to hear it. The second person must believe. He then is delivered from sin and its penalty through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The person who preaches, who brings good news, is said to have beautiful feet.

Jesus isn't mentioned in Isaiah or Romans as the person who brings good news and therefore has beautiful feet. However, we would consider his nail-scarred feet to be the most beautiful because of what he has done for us. The first step was leaving heaven to come to earth to be and share the good news.

Jesus is our example. It seems like he was constantly traveling. The Savior went through all the towns and villages in Galilee (Matthew 9:35). The method of getting from place to place involved his feet, obviously. His travel also involved a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. He went back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. It was enough to make the disciples seasick.

He spent so much time out and about in the public he was roundly criticized for being with "tax collectors and sinners" (Matthew 9:10, 11). It didn't bother him or alter his approach. He engaged in meeting people where they were. When Jesus was going to a synagogue leader's home, he encountered a woman who'd been subject to bleeding for 12 years (Matthew 9:18 - 20). He deliberately traveled to places where he would meet non-Jews: the Canaanite woman our guest speakers spoke about a few weeks ago (Matthew 15:21 - 28), Samaritans who were regarded by Jews as not much better than pagan dogs. Sometimes it seems like he traveled just to meet one person - the Canaanite woman or the demon-possessed man on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, in another Gentile area (Luke 8:26 - 39). Jesus healed the man and told him to go home to tell how much God had done for him. Then Jesus got back on the boat.

Do you think Jesus enjoyed telling people about the way of salvation, that he was the way of salvation? I'm pretty sure he did. It's hard to picture him being who he was and doing what he did and have the attitude of Alexander who had a "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

Jesus found joy and blessing in proclaiming the good news. When Zaccheus turned his life over to Jesus, the Savior pronounced, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:9, 10). He spoke of the shepherd and woman rejoicing after they found their lost sheep and coin. They were illustrations of the rejoicing in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:3 - 10). Now who in heaven would rejoice? Angels? God the Father? With Jesus sitting in the corner pouting? I don't think so.

Read John 17:1 - 5.

Jesus Christ summarized his life. He brought glory to the Father by giving eternal life to all who would believe. He said he'd finished the work and desired God to glorify him again. He went on to say he'd given his followers the word of the Father which is the word of salvation and eternal life (John 17:14).

Jesus passed the baton to his disciples. He began the process when he called the first disciples to follow him telling them he'd make them fishers of men. When Jesus sent out 72 of his disciples (Luke 10:1 - 20), he explained the harvest was plentiful, workers were few and they were to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. This is followed by an emphatic "Go!" He wanted them to have beautiful feet.

When the 72 returned they were full of joy because demons had submitted to them. Jesus didn't jump up and down. It seems like more of a matter-of-fact response. He was fully aware of what had happened, what the disciples were able to do and of Satan falling from heaven. The Lord told them, "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." They were to find greatest joy in the fact they'd be in heaven. We are to rejoice in our salvation and that of others.

The theme was woven throughout his teaching. In the parable of the wedding banquet (Matthew 22:1 - 14), the king tells his servants the banquet is ready. The invited refused to come. Therefore, the servants need to go to the street corners to invite to the banquet anyone they find. The implication for followers of Jesus Christ is to go in search of people.

At the end of his physical presence on earth, Jesus informed his followers of what they were to do. Each historical account has a variation of the Great Commission. The most familiar is in Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Mark, included in some manuscripts: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Luke: "This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46 - 48). John: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). Acts: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Do you think Jesus had an idea of what he wanted his followers to do, what he wants us to do? The marching orders are to go. The first two letters of the Gospel and Good News are G and O. We are to GO with the GOspel. Feet. Beautiful feet.

The good news can be proclaimed many ways including tracts, radio or social media. There's a sense of going in each of those, but as was emphasized with our Great Commission Sunday, there's a need to **be present**. Making people into disciples and followers of Jesus Christ requires contact. Some can be done through phone calls and texts, but a hands-on approach reaps more benefit as we follow in the footsteps of the Master.

There are some who come to Christ more or less on their own initiative. They may be driven by an inner longing for peace and answers to life's struggles. We're grateful for all who come to know Christ that way.

Most come to Christ because somebody reached out to them and told them the good news. My story includes women who came to my church to conduct a VBS – two weeks, mornings and afternoon. It was a church setting but the women had to go from where they lived to where I was.

I thought my story might be similar to others at our VBS planning meeting. I asked who was influenced to come to know Jesus Christ through VBS. Turned out I was the only one. Everyone else had come through some other way of people communicating, preaching/proclaiming Jesus to them.

Who told you about Jesus? Who proclaimed the good news so you could hear and believe in Jesus Christ for salvation? Take a moment to think and then give thanks for that person and their impact.

Pause.

This summer we anticipate a lot of kids coming for Vacation Bible School. We're up to 22. It's one of those occasions where people come to us. We're living at a time in our country when fewer and fewer people seek God by going to church. Polls repeatedly show when people are asked about their religious affiliation, the fastest growing group is "nones." Not nuns who teach in Catholic schools or live in convents. N O N E S, those who claim no religious affiliation. They identify as atheist, agnostic, or not interested and the overwhelming majority aren't looking for anything.

A Pew Center report from last December revealed that 63% of the U.S. population self-identified as Christian down from 78% in 2007. Many of those would be nominal Christians. During the same time adults who say they're unaffiliated almost doubled to where now about 3 in 10 make that claim. Those who identify as Protestant has gone down 12 percentage points to the current 40% (source: Gregory A. Smith; Pew Research Center; December 14, 2021; About 3-in-10 U.S. Adults are Now Religiously Unaffiliated).

We are to go to the street corners of which Jesus spoke. It may be a street corner, a corner at the kitchen table or across the office cubicle or across the street.

It's difficult for most to go. One of the young men who was interviewed by the District Licensing Committee to be a pastor told us he was struggling with feeling trapped by the walls of the church. They'd just gone through a move and needed to renovate the building. He was extensively involved in the process. He recounted how at his previous secular job he found lots of opportunities when people would approach him, talk about situations in their lives, and ask questions. He missed the contacts and opportunities. I encouraged him to try to find ways to be outside of the walls, to be able to connect and told him I find it's the same way. It's tough to do....

I choose to go into the bank so I can talk to more of the workers rather than just one at the drive-thru. Most times it's merely an exchange of greetings. Sometimes there's more, like when I talked to the woman whose loved one recently died. Or the worker who told me she'd been to Carol Oestreich's funeral. She had never stayed for a funeral service here, though she'd been to other visitations. She heard the message of salvation at the service and I got to talk a little bit more at the bank. I like to take my time in the grocery store...and buy stuff that isn't on the list. I went there on Friday in search of boxes for sending VBS material. I bypassed the workers at the front of the store as I saw someone in the aisle stocking shelves. I thought I'd ask him. When I got there, it was one of the guys from youth group.

If we're going to be fishers of men, we need to go where the fish are. That's one of the principles of fishing. You go where the fish are. Fishermen go along the shore of the river or lake or out in a boat. There they may use lures or bait to try to entice fish to be interested. You can't fish from home. You can't do it virtually. Wouldn't do any good to take the lures out of the tackle box in the garage and hope for a bite.

When it comes to bringing the good news to people, there are some things we can do from home, especially if we're talking about going long distances around the world. We can pray for those who go and the people they meet. We can give our money to support them.

That's not all that can be done and should be done when it comes to going locally. I don't know how this will work out for you, how specifically this will be accomplished in your life. Maybe walks in neighborhood, visit nursing homes, delivering meals, jail to lead a Bible study, VBS.

The question before all of us is: How do we go locally? How do you fish? Who will be like Isaiah when God asked, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8). Will we be like the prophet: "Here am I. Send me!" Will we have beautiful feet?

During a renovation of the Washington Monument in the 1990s workers discovered graffiti from the 1800's. It was different in tone from today's graffiti. The decision was made to preserve the words for visitors to read: "Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory more lofty and enduring than this." I wish he'd said the monument would have been for Christ. He did get the importance of helping bring someone to Jesus.

Our Lord spoke of the reward for going: "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life" (Mark 10:28-30). Sounds like legitimate happiness.

Christian medical worker Tom Little and his team worked in Afghanistan delivering medical supplies to villagers in remote regions. On one occasion, freezing rain soaked them as they made their way over the mountains. When they arrived at their destination and took off their shoes, blisters on their feet opened up. The locals saw this and began repeating a sentence. The team members asked their translator who explained: "They're saying that your feet are beautiful. You have beautiful feet!" ([outreachmagazine.com/blogs/lausanne/3860-Beautiful-Feet-the-Mountains.html](http://outreachmagazine.com/blogs/lausanne/3860-Beautiful-Feet-the-Mountains.html)).

Your feet may propel you faster down the track. You may have shoes so big other people can't fill them. You may be able to kick the ball farther than others. None of that means anything in eternal values. Whoever goes with the good news of salvation through Christ, God says they have beautiful feet.

A missionary was known to always carry a single penny in his pocket. He explained its purpose. It was to remind him of his value. One penny is 1 cent. The definition of missionary is "one who is sent." One cent, one sent.

It would have been hard to not notice there's a penny in your bulletin along with the words "One cent. One sent." If you don't have one, there are more at the Info Center. You may have already figured out why it's there. I could have been more cryptic, just have the penny without the words. I wanted to provide a way to remember our mission – to be one who is sent. We're to go. Feet. Beautiful feet.