

## TXT MSG: What We Believe about the Bible

"TRANSLATION: SEED OF LIFE"

ROMANS 10:13-17

### This Week's Core Competency

**Authority of the Bible** – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Not that that long ago buying a Bible was simply a matter of picking the binding and color. The Bible was the King James or Authorized Version. Today there's more than a dozen popular English versions to choose from not to mention the multiple editions of each—study Bibles, recovery Bibles, application Bibles, devotional Bibles, parallel Bibles, children's Bibles, student Bibles, chronological Bibles, daily reading Bibles, men's Bibles, women's Bibles, and family Bibles. Search "Bibles" on christianbook.com, and you get 3583 results! Some of the more popular versions that you're likely to see in your Christian bookstore include: the King James (KJV) or Authorized Version (AV); the New King James Version (NKJV); the New American Standard Bible (NASB); the English Standard Version (ESV); the Revised Standard Version (RSV); the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV); the New International Version (NIV); the New Living Translation (NLT);

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***If God spare me I will one day make the boy that dives the plough in England to know more of Scripture than the pope himself.***

***-William Tyndale***

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the New English Bible (NEB); the Contemporary English Version (CEV); Today's English Version (TEV); the New English Translation (NET or the NET Bible); the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB); the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB); the Revised English Bible (REB); the Douay-Rheims Bible (DR); the Living Bible (LB); and The Message (MSG). To mention just the more popular ones!

So why are there so many different English versions? (Over 25 of the whole Bible and approximately 40 of just the New Testament) The answer is really quite simple. There are two and only two reasons why English translations differ. Their translators are either translating *different* texts or they're translating the same texts *differently*. Here are two New Testament examples of the first reason why translations differ. One big example pertains to the ending of Mark's Gospel. The KJV and NKJV include verses 9-16; most modern English translations either omit them or include them with comments to the effect that these verses are not found in some ancient manuscripts. The NIV includes them prefaced by this statement, "The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20." The NIV like other modern versions typically call attention to differences in existing manuscripts in footnotes or marginal notes. A few versions include a shorter ending that appears in some manuscripts and ancient translations (e.g., NRSV, TEV). One small example pertains to Revelation 22:19 where the KJV reads, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the *book of life*, and out of the holy city . . ." (cf., NKJV). Whereas the NIV along with other modern versions read, "And if anyone

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takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the *tree of life* and in the holy city . . ." The KJV and NKJV read "book of life" while other modern translations read "tree of life" because the translators are translating texts with two different words. The first text reads "the *biblou* [book] of life," while the second reads "the *xulou* [tree] of life." The majority of biblical scholars consider the text translated by most modern versions more reliable than the text translated by the KJV and NKJV.

The majority of the differences between English versions can be attributed to the second reason why translations differ—translators are translating the same texts *differently*. Contrary to what some might think, translation involves much more than replacing *that* Hebrew or Greek word with *this* English word. The complexity of the task is reflected in two basic approaches to it: *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*. With *formal equivalence* each word of the original Hebrew or Greek language is represented by a word in the English language, and the word and clause order is kept as nearly identical to that of the original language as possible. Thus this approach translates word for word. With *dynamic equivalence* (sometimes called *functional equivalence*) the goal is to render the Hebrew or Greek language text in the closest natural equivalent in the English language, both in meaning and style. This approach translates phrase for phrase or thought for thought.

The complexity of managing these competing principles is caught in comments from the editors of the NET Bible. "Consider the Lord's declaration in Mark 1:17: 'I will make you fishers of men.' This wording, found in the KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, REB, and ultimately going back to Tyndale, is familiar to churchgoers. But in contemporary English it communicates a meaning that deviates slightly from the point: Jesus did not want his apostles to evangelize only adult males, but all people. But there is a second problem with this verse: '*fishers of men*' is archaic. The NRSV opts for 'I will make you fish for people.' This resolves the two problems of the older translations, but introduces two others. First, it sounds as if Jesus will *force* ('make') the disciples to 'fish for people'; second, [the change from 'of men' to 'for people'] results in a subtle shift from a focus on a new occupation to a mere activity. The NLT and TEV get past the first problem but not the second ('I will show you how to fish for people'; 'I will teach you to catch people'). So, how best to solve the dilemma? The full meaning of Jesus' declaration includes both nonexclusive evangelism and implications of an occupational shift. It is too cumbersome to express this as 'I will make you fishermen of people,' though the archaism is removed. Nor is it correct to translate this as 'I will make you fishers of mankind' because that would imply a mission to Gentiles which the disciples could not have conceived of at that time in redemptive history. This text illustrates the clash of the translational objectives of accuracy, readability, and elegance. On this passage—for now—we have settled on the translation, 'I will turn you into fishers of people.' We have retained an archaism both because of its familiarity and because the alternative 'fishermen' was too inelegant. We preferred the phrase 'turn you into fishers' instead of 'make you fishers' both because of its clarity and the hint of the disciples' conversion as a prerequisite to their new occupation. We chose not to go with the more natural but less accurate rendering of 'I will teach you to catch people.' In this passage, accuracy was more important than readability or elegance. But a decision was not easy; we are still open to suggestions" ("How would you characterize the NET Bible as a translation?" *Preface* to the NET Bible).

## day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Romans 10:13-17

13for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14How, 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? 15And how can they preach

unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

16But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

17Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

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## **EXAMINE** – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Highlight OT quotations.
- \* Circle "they."
- \* Box "how can" (4x).
- \* Draw an arrow from "believed" to "believe," and another from "heard" to "hear" in v. 14.
- \* Draw an arrow from "preaching" to "preach" in v. 15.
- \* Circle "beautiful" in v. 15.

## day **2**

## **EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Paraphrase verse 13 so that an eight-year-old child can understand it.
2. Verses 14, 15 contain four rhetorical "how-can-they" questions, which have the same implied answer. What is it?
3. Explain the relationship of "calling" to "believing."
4. Explain the relationship of "believing" to "hearing."
5. Explain the relationship of "hearing" to "preaching."
6. Explain the relationship of "preaching" to "being sent."
7. "Those who bring good news" don't literally have "beautiful feet" do they? So what's the point of this figurative expression?
8. Paul links calling on the Lord in verse 13 to hearing a message about him, which he calls "the word of Christ" in verse 17. What do you think the spoken "word about Christ" has to do with the written "word about Christ" in the New Testament?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about any implications you think this passage has for Bible translation.

**EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Paul quotes Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13 to prove that salvation is granted to everyone who "calls on the name of the Lord," that is to everyone who believes rather than keeps the law, a point missed by the Jews (vv. 1-4). Calling "on the name of the Lord" amounts to no more than "calling on the Lord," and in this context "the Lord" clearly refers to "the Lord Jesus Christ." This is implied by verse 17 where he says, "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." No one who trusts in Christ will ever be disappointed (v. 11).

In a series of four rhetorical questions the apostle goes on to explore four prerequisites to calling on the name of the Lord: believing, hearing, preaching, and sending. Each of the questions begins, "How can they?" and the implied answer to each one is "They can't." Paul's logic hardly needs explaining. Nevertheless, it goes like this. People cannot call on Jesus Christ without believing that he is able to save them. And they cannot believe that he is able to save them without first hearing about him. And they cannot hear about him without someone preaching to them. And they cannot preach to them without being sent. Being "sent" in this context implies that Christ's heralds do not come in their own authority with their own message but in the authority of the one who sent them with the message he entrusted to them. "Consequently," Paul says in verse 17, "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." It is this gospel message concerning Christ spoken by him through his heralds that produces faith.

Clearly the spoken "word of Christ" is an essential link in the chain of events that leads to faith and salvation. So also is the written word of Christ without which those who preach today would have nothing to say. For us who were not eyewitnesses to his words and works, the written word is our only source of the "word of Christ."

All of this strongly implies not only our need for God's written word in English, but also others' need for the Bible in their languages as well something that was recognized early by the Reformers. In 1517, the year Oxford instructor William Tyndale moved to Cambridge, seven people were burned alive for teaching their children the Ten Commandments in

English. You see the English Bible was still outlawed in England. Tyndale decided that Englishmen needed the Scriptures in their native tongue so in 1523 he applied to Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, for permission to translate the Bible into English. His request was never granted.

Later, a priest taunted Tyndale, saying the people had less need for God's law than the Pope's. To which Tyndale replied, "I defy the Pope and all of his laws; and if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of Scripture than the pope himself." Fearing for his life he fled England and sailed to Hamburg in 1524, and later at Wittenberg, the home of Martin Luther, safely pursued his work. In 1525 his initial printing effort was discovered at Cologne, but he escaped to Worms, where in 1526 he completed the first printing of the New Testament in English. His little books soon arrived in London, smuggled in bags of flour and bales of cloth.

Bishop Tunstall burned many of the books. Unwittingly, he sent Augustine Packington, Tyndale's friend, to buy more. So the bishop's purchases actually began to finance more of Tyndale's publication. With the help of friends, including Miles Coverdale and John Rogers, parts of the Old Testament and revised New Testaments were printed at Antwerp until 1535. There, a turncoat friend betrayed Tyndale to the authorities.

In the misery of Vilvorde Dungeon, he continued translating the Old Testament until his martyrdom on October 6, 1536. His last words were "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." God honored Tyndale's promise to the plowboy and his prayer for the king. God's word was unstoppable. It was now profoundly expressed in the vivid imagery of William Tyndale's English, which continues to shape our language and thought today (John Fox, *Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World*, 350-66). It has been said "It is surprising that the name of William Tyndale is not more familiar, for there is no man who did more to enrich the English language. Tyndale is the man who taught England how to read and showed Shakespeare how to write. No English writer—not even Shakespeare—has reached so many."

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## *The Message of this Passage*

*No one can call on the name of the Lord and be saved who has not heard the message about him, which makes translating and preaching the word of Christ indispensable.*

### day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage.**
  1. Share the word of Christ that people must hear in order to be saved.
  2. Recognize the richness of our inheritance with respect to translations of the Bible in English.
  3. Contribute to the translation and distribution of the Bible in other languages.
  4. Determine which English translation is best for you.
  
- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**
  
- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
  - o Belonging
  - o Becoming
  - o going Beyond

### **“Translation: Seed of Life”**

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 13 **everyone**

A quotation from Joel 2:32

v. 14 **then**

Or "therefore." "Verse 14, with its 'therefore' followed by a question, marks the beginning of a new unit of thought" tied closely to "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" in verse 13 (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 662). "In verse 13 Paul has affirmed that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. For Paul the Lord is Jesus Christ, and it is clear to him that the Jewish nation as a whole has not called upon the name of the Lord. Throughout the remainder of this chapter Paul deals with the question as to why it is that the Jews have not called upon the Lord. He does this by constructing a logical chain with five links in order to see where the failure lies. These five links are expressed in reverse historical order by means of four questions (call to . . . believed . . . heard the message . . . proclaimed . . . sent out)" (Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 203).

vv. 14, 15 **how can**

"Most of the links in this chain are self-evident and require no comment. It goes without saying that men will only call (for salvation) upon one in whom they believe. In the next clause it is right to translate strictly, 'whom (not of whom) they have not heard'. Christ must be heard either in his own person, or in the person of his preachers, through whom his own word (v. 17) is spoken; otherwise faith in him is impossible. Further, those who 'make proclamation' must, if they are to speak the word of Christ, come not of their own choice or on their own authority, but because they are sent. The verb 'sent' (*apostolosin*) is cognate with the noun 'apostle' (*apostolos*). Christian missionaries act under and with the authority of him who sent them. The chain of argument is at an end. Men call on the Lord because they believe; they believe because they hear; they hear because others preach; these preach because they are sent—by the Lord, with whom the whole process begins, as it ends with him" (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC, 204).

vv. 14, 15 **they**

"Of whom is Paul speaking in this paragraph? He explicitly identifies 'Israel' as the object of his criticism in v. 19. But up to that point, Paul has used indefinite third person plural verbs, making it likely that at least in vv. 14-15, and perhaps in all of vv. 14-18, he is thinking of people generally. However, there are also indications that Paul is thinking of Israel particularly in this paragraph. The third person plural verbs in v. 14 take the reader back inevitably to the last use of such verbs in chap. 10, in Paul's indictment of the Jews for their ignorance of, and failure to submit to, God's righteousness in vv. 2-3. Verses 14-21 seem to continue that indictment, as Paul removes any possible excuse that the Jews might have for their failure to respond to God's offer of righteousness in Christ. Probably, then, Paul writes generally in vv. 14-18 about the relationship of all people to the message of the gospel while at the same time thinking especially of the application of these points to Israel. His point, then, is that Israel cannot plead ignorance: God has made his purposes clear in both the OT (note the six OT quotations in vv. 14-21) and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. So the fault rests with Israel: she has been 'disobedient and obstinate' (v. 21; cf. v. 16)" (Moo, 662, 63).

v. 15 **How beautiful**

A quote from Isaiah 52:7; cf., Nahum 1:15. "It is also possible that the Greek word *horaioi* should be translated 'timely,' rather than 'beautiful,' lending further support to the eschatological focus on the apostolic preaching" (664; cf., the NET Bible). "The Feet of those who bring good news" is simply a figurative way of referring to "the coming of those who bring good news" (Newman and Nida, 204).

v. 16 **Israelites**

Lit., "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (ESV).

v. 16 **not all**

Possibly a figure of speech called *litotes* meaning "only a few" or possibly an allusion to verse 13, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"-but "not all" call.

v. 16 **Lord who**

A quote from Isaiah 53:1

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).