



**The Church of Beautiful Feet**  
**Romans 10:8-15**  
**June 3, 2018**  
**Rev. Diane Christopher**

Prayer: Stir in us now, Holy Spirit, a willingness to hear, the desire to know the truth and the courage to follow in joyful obedience, that we may be formed by your word into women and men of faith. Amen

Background to Scripture passage: The Apostle Paul longs for all to know Christ, especially his own people, the Jewish people.

Read Romans 10:8-15

A couple of years ago, I went with my mother to visit a foot doctor. She needed new inserts for her shoes. After Mom took off her shoes and socks, the young doctor gently took Mom's foot into his hands. Now, those of you who are in your 80s and 90s, you know how your feet look by the time you get to that age. However, this doctor held my mother's feet with reverence and respect, and said, "These feet have seen a lot of miles." Did you know that your feet will carry you the equivalent of five times around the earth in an average life span?

So, look at your feet. Do you like your feet? On a scale of one to ten – one being ugly and 10 being beautiful, how would you rate your feet? I am pretty sure not many of you would rate your feet a ten, unless you are a foot model. Doctors tell us that your feet are mirrors of your health. Signs of diabetes, arthritis, circulatory problems, often appear first in your feet. More often than not, feet are not beautiful to look at.

Did you know it is possible to have beautiful feet? At least, in God's eyes. I'm not talking a pedicure (although I would really like one). God is not so much interested in how your feet look, but where they go and what they do.

It says in our passage, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news." First of all, what is the Good News?

God so loved the world that God came to be with us. Through Jesus, we get to know what God is like. We can have a relationship with God because Jesus broke down the barriers between humans and God because of sin. As it says in our passage, “If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” That word “saved” means having that relationship with God that is now and goes on forever.

Announcing the Good News is simply having a conversation with someone about what God means to you, about having a relationship with God. “The word is near you,” our passage says, “it is in your mouth and in your heart.” We are called to simply express it, to move our faith from the inside to the outside, from our hearts to our mouths.

So as we think about moving our faith from inside our own hearts to outside, this is call not just for ourselves personally, but for us as a church as well. We, as a church, are to carry the Good News. The word for “church” in Greek, *ekklesia*, means “a called out people of God.”

Rev. Medina talks about this in his article in this month’s Valley Voice (which, by the way, is out on the welcome center counters). He talks about us becoming a missional church. In other words, not being a church just for us, just feeding us, just meeting our needs; but also being a church for others, feeding others, meeting the needs of others. Being a people called out for God.

The problem is we (and many churches) have a tendency to talk like the goal of the church is to bring more people into our building. We start new programs or projects and wonder if this will get us new members and therefore more money coming in. If we do this project will it yield anything tangible? It is all about us gaining something.

When we begin to think like this, we become an institution whose primary concern is self-preservation. As this happens, decisions are made that benefit fewer and fewer people and we lose the bigger picture of sharing the good news. We can end up playing church more than being the church. As a result, our feet do not look very beautiful.

But Jesus said go and make disciples. He didn’t say grow your churches. The primary mission of the church is to change lives. We simply help people have an encounter with Christ.

Are we ready to offer life to our community without expecting anything in return?

I want to give several examples of how we do this here at Valley, ministries that may not see future tangible results. They may not grow our church, but we do them because we want to change lives.

### The Traveling Day Camp

Instead of Vacation Bible School this summer, we are bringing in a traveling day camp. Several years ago, our Presbyterian church camp burned down due to a forest fire. As they wait for the camp to be rebuilt, they have a developed traveling day camp where they bring church camp to churches for kids. They will be here the last week in June.

As we announced this camp, we began to hear comments from people that went like this: Why are we doing this? We will never see these people again. This will not grow our church.

I hope you know by now that is not why we are doing church camp. We are doing it so we can tell children about the love of God for them. We are planting seeds in their hearts for Christ. And yes, most of them we will never see again. But we are starting to make disciples for Christ, which is what Jesus asked us to do. And as a result, we will have beautiful feet.

### The Valley Galley

You know, that red trailer that sits in our back parking lot. Here is the story behind that trailer: Several years ago, we had a committee called Valley Vision. This committee began to discuss how to bring the love of God out into the community, to go outside the walls of this building.

They discussed all kinds of ideas, but not really sure what to do. Then one day, and I read the words of Lois Macfarlane:

“One day, I was on my way to the dentist, and we drove by an empty parking lot and saw this “little red wagon.” It was a food trailer...Later that day I went by again, took some pictures, phoned several friends who had been praying for inspiration, and told them to meet me at this parking lot. I wanted to show them the food trailer. We all loved it and thought this is our way of reaching out to do some of the things we do best: cooking, baking, and sharing God’s love to all. This could be what we had been praying for, a concrete way to share Christ’s love beyond our walls! I made a call to the owner of the food trailer....she told us that she had prayed the night before for the Lord to send

her a buyer. We all got goose bumps. We were sure this was meant to be our food wagon.”

As you know, it did become ours, and God has used it this past year in wonderful ways outside the walls of this church building. Most of the people we encounter we will never see again, but the seeds of God’s love are being planted in people’s lives. And as a result, we have beautiful feet.

### Memorials

Another example: I think of this because we are having a memorial today. Often times, people come to memorials who do not attend church, and they are hearing about God’s love for them, maybe for the first time. I had one woman come up to me several years ago after a memorial service and said, “I think I can actually believe God loves me.”

Often times, memorials come at the most inopportune times. Death is not convenient. Often we must rearrange our schedules and the church’s schedules in order to walk by the side of people in grief. This is what we do so people can hear about the love of God. And not only hear it, but see it.

Those of you who take part in helping put on these memorials – ushers, greeters, our office staff, those of you who put together receptions and serve coffee and cookies with a smile, then you clean up – you have beautiful feet. You are demonstrating God’s love to the bereaved.

And then I think of extended communion where we bring the love of God out to the homebound. You have beautiful feet.

And the list goes on and one of all the different ministries we do to share God’s love. We do them not to preserve our institution, nor to grow our membership. We do it to bring God’s love to all through word and deed.

Didn’t Jesus say he came not to be served, but to serve? He demonstrated this by washing....feet.

I am sure Jesus’ feet were calloused, cracked, sweaty, dirty. But they were beautiful feet. They were the very feet of God. They were feet that were pierced on a cross for us. And they were feet that walked out of the tomb three days later.

This is the Good News.

I pray we will be more and more a church of beautiful feet. Amen.

(keep people seated for song)