

NoBible Sunday

Sermon ideas

Wycliffe
Bible
Translators



Introduction

Begin with bible reading (Romans 10:9-15), **not in English** - use a language from the resource sheet or someone from your congregation.

Romans 10:10 'For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved'.

Option 1 Using Latin

Example

9 Quia si confitearis in ore tuo Dominum Jesum, et in corde tuo credideris quod Deus illum suscitavit a mortuis, salvus eris. **10** Corde enim creditur ad justitiam: ore autem confessio fit ad salutem. **11** Dicit enim Scriptura: Omnis qui credit in illum, non confundetur. **12** Non enim est distinctio Judaei et Graeci: nam idem Dominus omnium, dives in omnes qui invocant illum.

13 Omnis enim quicumque invocaverit nomen Domini, salvus erit. **14** Quomodo ergo invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? aut quomodo credent ei, quem non audierunt? quomodo autem audient sine praedicante? **15** quomodo vero praedicabunt nisi mittantur? sicut scriptum est: Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!

Romans 10:9-15

Isn't it remarkable that just 650 years ago what you've just heard was the **ONLY** way the people in this country would hear the Bible? Not only was it in Latin, a language that only 10-20% of the population even understood, but it was an inaccurate translation from the outset, only made worse over centuries by copying it out by hand, because of course this was before the printing press was invented.

We're in a uniquely privileged position as speakers of English, that we have over 450 different translations of the Bible to choose from. But have a look at this short video produced by Wycliffe Bible Translators, and I think you'll be shocked, as I was, what the situation is like for many others.



Play Bible Banquet Video

(If no video, pull in key statistics on slides/read them out)

1 in 5 people cannot access the whole bible in their own language. 160 million don't have a single verse.

I found the idea of Bible Poverty very challenging, and that's what today's about.

Traditionally in the church calendar, the last Sunday in October, is known as Bible Sunday. But this year we've joined in with many other churches across the country to have a No Bible Sunday. A time when we consider those across the world who do not have access to a Bible in their own language.

Example

9 Si tu reconnais publiquement de ta bouche que Jésus est le Seigneur et si tu crois dans ton cœur que Dieu l'a ressuscité, tu seras sauvé. **10** En effet, c'est avec le cœur que l'on croit et parvient à la justice, et c'est avec la bouche que l'on affirme une conviction et parvient au salut, comme le dit l'Écriture: **11** Celui qui croit en lui ne sera pas couvert de honte.[a]

12 Ainsi, il n'y a aucune différence entre le Juif et le non-Juif, puisqu'ils ont tous le même Seigneur, qui se montre généreux pour tous ceux qui font appel à lui.

13 En effet, toute personne qui fera appel au nom du Seigneur sera sauvée[b]. **14** Mais comment donc feront-ils appel à celui en qui ils n'ont pas cru? Et comment croiront-ils en celui dont ils n'ont pas entendu parler? Et comment entendront-ils parler de lui, si personne ne l'annonce? **15** Et comment l'annoncera-t-on, si personne n'est envoyé? Comme il est écrit: Qu'ils sont beaux les pieds [de ceux qui annoncent la paix,] de ceux qui annoncent de bonnes nouvelles![c]

Romans 10:9-15

Does anyone want to guess what language that was?

And how about the passage, it's one many of you will be familiar with, any guesses of that?

Before I tell you if you're right or not tell me, how did that feel? To hear the Bible reading, in something other than English?

It's a strange thought isn't it, we really do take it for granted. I don't know if you're like me, but I've got a shelf at home with all my different translations along it. This could be interesting, I wonder, who thinks they've got more than, two translations, more than five, ten?

Anyone got over 400? That's a big shelf.

I ask because there are actually over 450 translations of the Bible in English. I was very challenged by a video created by Wycliffe Bible

Translators, with whom we've joined in this event, who put that 'wealth' of translations into context. Let's have a look at it.

Play Bible Banquet Video



(If no video, pull in key statistics on slides/read them out)

1 in 5 people cannot access the bible in their own language. 160 million don't have a single verse.

I found the idea of Bible Poverty very challenging, and that's what today's about.

As some of you will know today we're holding what's been called 'No Bible Sunday' - a time when we consider those who don't have the wealth of Scriptures that we're blessed with in English.

So, did any of you guess what the passage was?

Understanding the Bible and the Promise of Salvation

Let's return to that reading again shall we, and this time, how about we have it in English

Read Romans 10:9-15 in English

Isn't that a lot better, and more impactful when you hear it in your own language? Can you imagine what it must be like to first hear the Bible in your mother tongue. Even though many have enough of a grasp of another language to perhaps understand some of it, nothing compares to hearing it in your 'heart language' as it is sometimes called.

And what vital words they are - at the beginning of the passage we have the simplicity of the Gospel laid out in just two statements. **That if you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that Jesus raised from the dead, you will be saved.** What an incredible promise!

Sometimes we feel like it's such a complicated process to bring someone to faith, but here's it's broken down into just two components.

Firstly believing that Jesus was raised from the dead. This claim was central to his ministry and message.

So the Jews answered and said to him, 'What sign do you show to us, since you do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken (John 2:18-22).

This was the most powerful claim of who he was, God himself. For only God could raise himself from the dead.

So when Romans 10 talks about believing that God raised him from the dead, it's not just believing that it happened, it is believing everything Jesus said about himself, and who he was, Immanuel, God with us. In Paul's words, "He is Lord".



But it isn't enough to just believe. We can believe all kinds of things, but they may not make a difference to our lives. We can believe that exercise will make us fitter, but it won't make a difference if we just believe it from our sofas.

And so it is with what we believe about Jesus. We can believe he is who he says he is. We can believe that he died for our sins, and that he was raised back to life.

But unless we decide to put him in charge, to declare to ourselves and others that he is Lord - he is in charge, he is number one in our lives, then all that he's done won't impact us, won't transform our lives.

After this 'formula' for salvation, Paul breaks down a delivery process for that message.

I'm sure most of us have ordered parcels online. Even though I have an estimated delivery date I just can't resist those links that tell you more details about where your awaited parcel is.

'Oh look, it's awaiting collection, still!
Or, currently at the sorting office, sometimes in the most obscure locations.

And then the final messages, 'Your parcel is 7 stops from being delivered' which is either redundant because I'm not there to receive it, or redundant because I am.

Nonetheless, I do love to see the process it's gone through.

Likewise Paul sets out the delivery pathway for the gospel. This is perhaps easiest to understand if we reverse the process

Sent - Christ sends herald of the Gospel

Preach - the heralds preach

Hear - the people hear

Believe - the hearers believe

Call - the believers call



Each is essential to the next. If no one is sent, they can't preach. If no one preaches, people can't hear. If they don't hear, how can they believe, and if they don't believe, why would they call on his name or declare he is Lord?

Just like that delivery tracking, if one part of the process breaks down, you won't be getting your delivery.

And this is where the vital need for the Bible in someone's own language comes in. How can the message of Jesus be preached if they don't have the words to do it, what will they hear if it's in a language they barely know, and what are the chances of them believing if they do?

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. This is what organisations like Wycliffe Bible Translators are here to do - bring that good news, literally, into a language the least reached people groups around the world need.

I hope after the notice last week some of you will have been following the daily emails that have been building up to today, and if you have then you'll appreciate just how much work is involved in making a single translation of the Bible

As I said we're partnering with Wycliffe Bible Translators today. They are named after John Wycliffe who is famous for translating the Bible into English for the very first time, in 1382.

Back then the only bible translation available was the Vulgate, in Latin, an error-prone translation in a language the majority of the population didn't understand.

But that didn't make it very accessible. Not only would it have cost a labourer 13 years wages to buy (it took ten months just to write one out), it was declared heresy to have a Bible in English, and promptly banned.

It was John Wycliffe who decided to change that. He believed that 'the sacred Scriptures are the property of the people' and despite persecution and arduous hand-written work, he and his team produced the very first Bible in the English language.

However, it was the start of a spiritual revolution across Europe. William Tyndale produced the first printed New Testament 150 years later (that cost just a week's wages), and having access to scriptures in their own language was a key part of the entire Reformation that brought the full message of the Gospel within the reach of so many for the first time. Similarly today, technology is making a huge impact in the way translations can reach the unreached.

So as you see, there is far more to this work than just the translation.

Finding new and innovative ways to share the message of the Bible, as well as enabling those new readers to engage with it, are a vital part of the work of Wycliffe today.



Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We are so blessed to have all the versions of Scripture that we do. I hope that as well as enlightening us about the need for translations around the world this will spur us to not take our own riches for granted.

Like at that banquet, we have a feast sitting in front of us. Yet for many it's something that we just snack on, occasionally. Perhaps just once a week, being fed by someone else standing up here.

The word of God, we are told in Hebrews 4, is living and active. It is God-breathed and useful for teaching and training us and 'equipping us for every good work' Paul tells Timothy in his second letter to him, third chapter.

But if this banquet just sits on the plate, and we never dig in, it won't do us any good. So I encourage you church, as we think about those who have little or no scriptures, let it also spur us on to make the most of the riches we are so blessed to have.

Finally then, 1 in 5 people don't have the whole Bible. How can they have faith, if they have nothing to hear?

We are taking up a collection today to support the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators, and if you haven't yet read their short devotionals it's just seven days of interesting information and videos that you can quickly look at, with some items to pray for.

There is information on your seats to find out more.



Lectionary Gospel passage

Romans 15: 1-6

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 4:16-24 New International Version (NIV)

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**[a]**

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."



hello@wycliffe.org.uk | 0300 303 1111 | wycliffe.org.uk | PO Box 1643, Oxford OX4 9PB

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