

Bible Readings:

2 Samuel 6 New International Version (NIV)

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

6 David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. **2** He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. **3** They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart **4** with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. **5** David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

6 When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. **7** The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God.

8 Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.

9 David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" **10** He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. **11** The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.

12 Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. **13** When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. **14** Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, **15** while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

16 As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷ They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. ¹⁸ After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. ¹⁹ Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

²⁰ When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

²¹ David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. ²² I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

²³ And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17 New International Version (NIV)

Ministers of the New Covenant

¹² Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, ¹³ I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵ For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? ¹⁷ Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

We're continuing our series on 2 Samuel.

We're looking at 2 Samuel chapter 6

It would be great to have your Bibles open there.

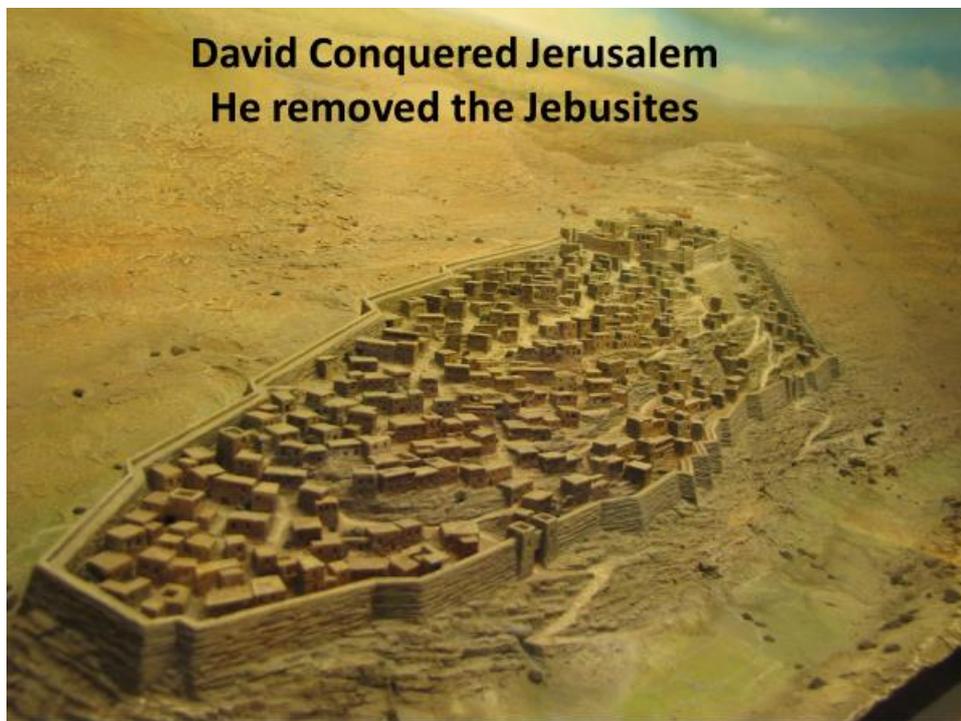
Let me pray before we begin...

Let's pray...

Context

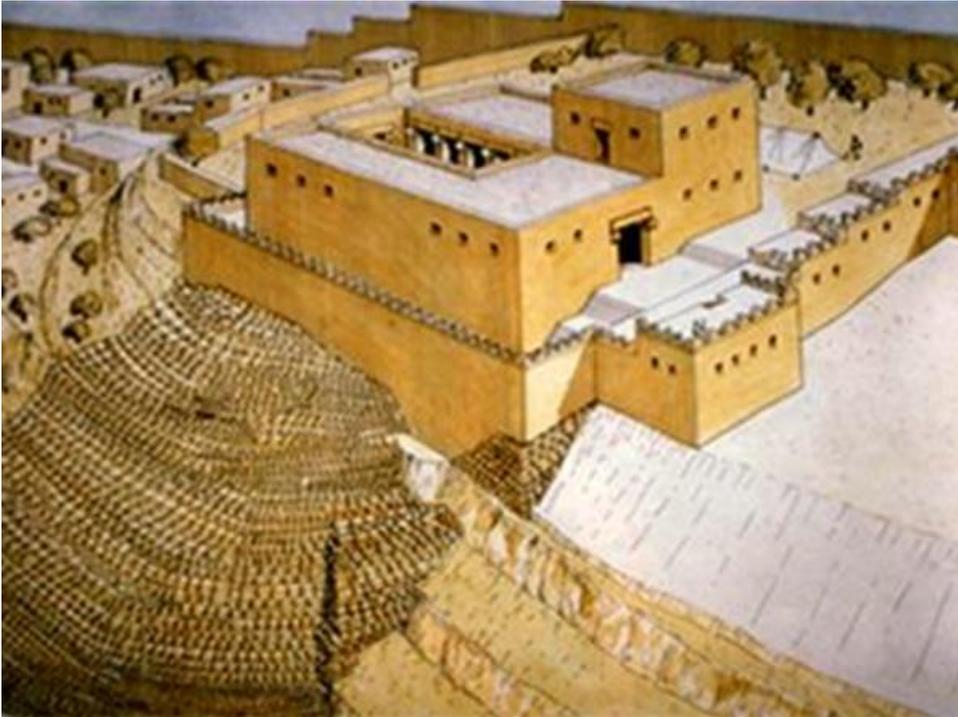
- Just a reminder of where we got to last time (2 Sam 5)

[PowerPoint 1-Jerusalem]



- King David conquered Jerusalem - defeated the Jebusites - and made Jerusalem his capital
- He also defeated Israel's arch enemy - the Philistines
- He was so successful that a foreign King Hiram of Tyre - brought building materials

[PowerPoint 2-Palace]



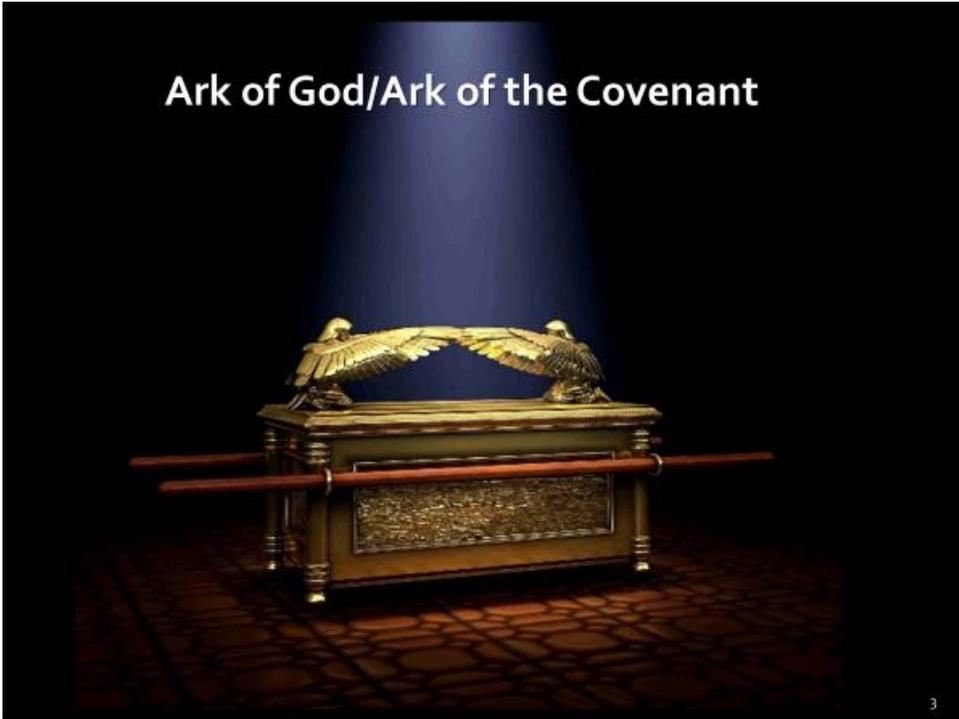
- And **built** David a **Palace** - fit for a King

The Ark of God (2 Samuel 6:1-2)

- With God central in his thinking and David being very **thankful** to **God** for making him King and giving him victory
- We come today's passage from **2 Sam 6**
- **David** and his **men** went to Baalah (aka **Kiraith Jearim**) in Judah to **get** the **Ark of God** and **bring** it to David's new capital city - **Jerusalem**
- What is the Ark of God?

[PowerPoint 3-Ark]

Ark of God/Ark of the Covenant



- Back in the Book of **Exodus (37)** - as a sign of **God's covenant with His people**, God had the Israelites make a **box** according to **His own design**, in which to **place** the stone tablets containing the **Ten Commandments**. This **box, or chest**, was called an "**Ark of the Covenant**" and was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.
- The **Ark** was to be **placed** in the **inner part of the tabernacle** [mobile church] in the desert and eventually in the Temple when it was built in Jerusalem.
- The **real significance** of the **Ark of the Covenant** was what took place at the lid of the box, known as the "**Mercy Seat**." The term 'mercy seat' comes from a Hebrew word meaning "**to cover, placate, appease, cleanse, cancel or make atonement** [make amends] for."
- It was here that the **high priest**, only once a year (Leviticus 16), entered the inner part of the Tabernacle - **the Holy of Holies** - and **atoned for his sins** and the **sins of the Israelites**. The priest sprinkled the **blood** of a

sacrificed animal onto the Mercy Seat - where God's promised to meet the High Priest (Ex 25:22) - and this sacrifice appeased the wrath and anger of God for past sins committed. This was the only place in the world where this atonement could take place.

- As well as the 10 commandments - the Ark also contained a gold jar of manna and Aaron's budding staff - (Heb 9:4b)
- How should the Ark be transported?
- God said the Ark must be carried by the poles on the side - and carried by a specific clan of the Levites - called Kohathites (Ex 25:14; 27:7; Num 4:15; 7:9)
- Now that we've established what the ark is, what was in it and how it should be transported
- We come to our passage this morning - and we see how the ark was transported in the WRONG way - that's in verses 3 to 11 of 2 Sam 6

The Ark Transported the Wrong Way (2 Sam 6:3-11)

- I don't think it's too much of an exaggeration to say that blokes in particular are not good at reading instructions
- A few times I've assembled flat pack furniture without reading the instructions and have ended up with spare pieces or
- I've realized when almost at the end of the assembly that I've put one of the part's upside down or the wrong way around and it doesn't quite fit
- If in doubt - read the instructions!

- Sometimes NOT following instructions - has worse consequences than at **other times**
- Here in 2 Sam 6 - 3 to 11 - not following instructions turns out to be **fatal**
- Let's have a look at what went wrong
- Looking at v3 - the **Ark** was in the house of **Abinadab** -
- It's **been there since 1 Sam 7**
- **Abinadab** was a **Levite** - the priestly tribe
- Still in v3 - they **put** the **Ark** on a **new cart** and wheeled it from Abinadab's house
- Is that how they were **supposed to transport it?**
- No!
- Even though it's a **NEW cart** - it's still not how they were **instructed**
- **Abinadab's two sons Ahio and Uzzah** guided the cart - v3
- David and ALL of **Israel** were **celebrating this procession** - with all sorts of **musical instruments** - v5 - it was a **joyous occasion**
- What a great day!
- **BUT** - It went wrong - see v6

[PowerPoint 4-Uzzah/Ark]



- The oxen pulling the cart with the ark on it - **stumbled**
- And **Uzzah** reached out and touched the ark - presumably in case it fell
- V7 - **God** was so angry - at this irreverent act - that he **stuck down Uzzah**
dead
- Is **God** harsh here?
- On face value it **seems** that way

[PowerPoint 5-Reasons why God is not harsh]

3 Reasons why God was not harsh with Uzzah

1. Israel disobeyed God – God gave clear instructions on how the Ark should be carried. In front of 30,000 people – an example has to be set.

2. They didn't understand God's Holiness – God is Holy and must not be approached in the wrong way or in an impure state.

3. They didn't respect God – the Ark represented God Himself – not a 'good luck charm'

5

But I want to argue this morning that God was not harsh

1. Reason 1 - They disobeyed God

In Exodus 25:10-15 God gave Moses very clear instructions on how the Ark should be **carried**. And in Numbers 4:15 God told them exactly what would happen if they didn't listen - He said if they touched any of God's Holy things they would die {like Adam & Eve in Garden)

God even repeated these instructions (Num 7:7-9; Deut 10:8)

Previously Israel had always carried the Ark of the Covenant in the **right way**.

(See Dt 31:9, 25, Josh 3:3, 15, 17 4:9-10, 18, 6:6, 8:33, 1 Sam 4:4)

Remember there were more than **30,000 people** present here as the Ark was moved. In front of that many people - **God's instructions can't be seen as just optional** - and that God and His holy things are just "stuff" - like moving furniture.

2. Reason 2 - They didn't understand God's Holiness

Even though God is loving and merciful, He's also the Creator of the entire Universe. He's the only being that can create a world full of life and beauty. That sets Him apart from anyone else. That's what holiness means - set apart, sacred and worthy of veneration. So no, God's not being picky or OCD. He's showing that He's to be taken seriously.

Take the Sun, for example - it's unique and set apart. We need it for life. But the closer we get to the sun, the more intense it gets. The power and goodness of the Sun that allows life is also extremely dangerous. If we get too close to it and we'll end up being a 'fried'. Even here on earth if we don't take proper precautions, the heat of the sun can severely damage us if we don't respect it.

And in the same way, God in his holiness has created and sustains all life. He's good. But if you approach God in the wrong way or in an impure state, His presence is also very dangerous. We see this when Moses drew near to the burning bush in Exodus 3:5. God said to him *"don't come any closer...take off your sandals, for the place you're standing is holy ground"*

Uzzah had perhaps become too familiar with the Ark - with it being in his father's house for so long?

Uzzah mistakenly thought God can't take care of the Ark Himself - if it were to fall over?

And Uzzah, mistakenly thought that the ground the Ark might have fallen on - was less holy than his hand?

3. Reason 3 - They didn't respect God

While God didn't literally live in the Ark, it did represent His presence to Israel. He said it was where He'd meet with Moses. Back in Exodus 25:22 God said to Moses *"There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel."*

Israel was treating the Ark of God as 'stuff', like a good luck charm. They weren't seeing it as **representing the presence of God Himself.** The Ark also contained God's commandments, which they treated lightly. (Deut. 10:1-5) Think about it for a second. If the Queen visited Australia, we wouldn't ask her to sit in the back of a Ute. Can you imagine the news headlines *"Aussies put the Queen in the back of a Ute!"*

So, it's hard to blame God for being angry when He's being tossed in the back of a cart!

Application

While it would be **easy** for us to **see God as** the bad guy here...

Remember He put up with Israel breaking His commandments over a 12-mile journey with the Ark

David and Israel - yes, they were celebrating - but they didn't recognize God's Holiness - nor give Him the proper honour and respect, He deserves.

A lot of people don't like this story - because they don't like the idea of God not being casual - like us. We tend to think today that things like **honour and respect are old fashioned and outdated. We live in a society that's quick to harshly condemn those in positions of authority.**

The **right response** to this passage isn't "look how cruel God was!" The **proper response** is to look in the mirror. If we do, we'll see that **we've been far too casual with the Holy One who gives us our every breath**.

(pause)

- Continuing the story from 2 Sam 6
- From v9
- **David was angry with God** for striking down Uzzah -
- And **David was also afraid** v10 - he didn't want the Ark in Jerusalem anymore - **He saw it as bad luck**
- **David couldn't understand why his good intentions** to bring the ark of God into the people's lives **wasn't enough**
- As one commentator puts it **God cares about our intentions and our ACTIONS**
- Not obeying God instructions for the Ark was **fatal for Uzzah**
- Out of anger and fear - **David had the Ark sent to the home of Obed-Edom** - where it stayed for 3 months - v11
- Which brings us to the **second attempt to transport the Ark of God**
- That's in **verses 12 to 23**

The Ark of God transported the Correct Way (2 Sam 6:12-23)

- See v12
- **David found out that God blessed the household of Obed-Edom because the Ark was in his house**
- With any mistake - it's important we learn from it

- From a parallel passage in 1 Chronicles - we find out that **David did learn from his mistake**

[PowerPoint 6-Ark correct way]

David Transports the Ark the Correct Way (2 Sam 6:12-23)



- **David said this to the Levite priests - in 1 Chron 15:12-15**

¹² "You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. ¹³ It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way." ¹⁴ So the priests and Levites consecrated themselves in order to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the LORD.

- **Once they started transporting the Ark of God the correct way**
- **David was determined to do it right this time**

- See v13 - they made **sacrifices** to God after 6 steps - yes, that's a bit **excessive** - but from a heart that is towards God
- The main thing is - the **Ark of God** was treated as God's Holy presence
- And the procession and sacrifices were all for God and done God's way
- David didn't hold back on his own **worship** either
- See v14 - **David** wore a linen ephod and **danced** before the Lord with all his **might**
- It was a **wonderful musical procession** and **celebration**
- We shouldn't think all this **dancing** and **celebration** is over the top
- How many of us get **super excited** - when our team wins
- And we shouldn't think here that **David** is **half naked** or being **immodest**
- **David** was **wearing** a **linen ephod** - just like all the other **priests** and **Levites** - rather than **wearing** his **kingly regalia**
- **David** **humbled himself** to be like everyone else - because he's **worshipping God** - and when **worshipping God** - **David's status** or **clothes** were not **important** - It's God who is important
- Not everyone was **pleased** with **David's celebration** - though
- His **wife** - **Michal** (Saul's daughter) - **v16** - when she **saw David leaping** and **dancing** - she **despised** him
- We're not told why
 - Perhaps because she's **jealous** that **David** is **king** and not her father,
Saul
 - Perhaps because she **likes David** the **warrior king** but is not so keen on **David** - the **worshipper of God**

- Perhaps she **resented** being brought to David - and had to **leave her husband** behind
- Or perhaps - she just **doesn't** have a **heart** for God like David has
- Whatever the case - vv17-19 - David brought the ark to **Jerusalem** - placed it in a **special tent** - made **sacrifices** - **gave the people** - **God's blessing** - and **gave each person** - a loaf, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins
- When David returned to bless his whole household - v20
- He was **ridiculed** by **Michal** '*How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!*'
- David didn't care about Michal's' ridicule - his **worship** and **celebration** were **for the Lord** - and that's all that matters to him - v21 - and in any case as he points out - **God chose him**, not Michal's father, **Saul**, to be king
- In Fact, David is **prepared to humiliate himself** even more if it's **for the Lord** - v22
- For her ridicule of David - v23 - **Michal never had any children** - presumably because **David no longer had any time with her**

The bottom line is - **transporting the Ark the correct way** - worked out just fine.

Application

- How seriously do we **take God's Word** and His instructions?
- Are we **prepared to suffer the consequences** of not following His instructions?

- How seriously do we take God's Holiness - or are we a bit casual in how we approach and worship God?
- David put worshipping, respecting and obeying God ahead of pleasing his wife, Michal. Are we trying to please other people instead of pleasing God?
- From 2 Sam 6 and what happened to Uzzah - we see that the correct transportation and respect of the Ark of God is a matter of life and death.
- The chapter finished with David's triumphant procession into Jerusalem with the Ark of God
- This brings us to our NT passage and to another triumphant procession
- Please turn to 2 Cor 2:12-17

The Gospel is like the Ark (2 Cor 2:12-17)

[PowerPoint 7-Ark like Gospel]

The Gospel is like the Ark (2 Corinthians 2:12-17)

- *The Gospel is a matter of life and death – just like the Ark was*
- *The Gospel has a pleasing aroma of life and an aroma of death – Heaven or Hell*
- *The Gospel is equally as powerful as the Ark*
- *Jesus is like the Mercy Seat on the Ark*

- In this passage the **Apostle Paul** likens the spreading of the **Gospel** - that is the **Good News of Jesus** - to a triumphant procession or parade - v12
- And he says - that as **Christians** spread the **Gospel** - it's like we're spreading an aroma of knowledge of Jesus to people
- The **Gospel** is just like the **Ark** - it's a matter of life and death
- Because, the aroma of the **Good News of Jesus** is a matter of life and death
- See V15 - that aroma can be a **pleasing aroma** to those who believe in Jesus and **are saved for Heaven**
- But it can also be an **aroma of death** to those who don't believe in Jesus and **who perish** - and wind up in **Hell**

Application

- **We** might not realize it but we have something in our hands equally as holy and powerful as the Ark of God
- And that is the **Gospel message of Jesus**
- **Jesus** is like the **mercy seat** on the ark where the **sacrifice for sins** was made
- **Jesus' sacrifice** on the **cross** offers forgiveness of sins to all who believe in Him
- Unlike the **annual sacrifice** the priests made though - **Jesus' sacrifice** is a **once and for all sacrifice**
- We have that **Good News of the forgiveness of sins** - in our hands

- Are we handling the **Good News of Jesus** - as something that is **precious** and **holy** and **powerful** - OR are we too casual about it - like David and the Israelites were initially about the **Ark**?
- In our hands the **Good News of Jesus** - can save people for Heaven - and save them from Hell
- Just like the **Ark** was transported to another place
- We can transport the **Gospel** to another place - to someone who doesn't know Jesus
- By not sharing this **Good News of Jesus** - there will be consequences for the people who miss out - and consequences for us (2 Cor 5:10 & Ezek 33:2-9)
- Just like God gave specific instructions on how to honour the holiness of the ark and how to transport the ark
- God has given US - specific instructions on transporting the **Good News of Jesus**

[PowerPoint 8-Rom 10]

God's Specific Instructions to Transport the Gospel

¹³“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 anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

(Romans 10:13-15)

8

- See Romans 10:13-15
- “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- ¹⁴ How, 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? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”
- Those beautiful feet bringing the Good News of Jesus are our feet
- And these instructions are not optional - and not to be treated lightly or casually - but taken seriously
- Let's pray...