

When we say we are Christians, we are saying we believe that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. No one come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). He is the only way to have our sins forgiven and attain eternal life. Jesus is the Lord and our Savior. Yet, there are people on this planet who have never heard of Jesus. So, we ask, “***What happens to those who never heard about Jesus?***”

This question is not just an academic or theological question. It is a question of compassion concerning people, like you and me. And, it is a question of justice, specifically the justice and goodness of God. Is God truly good and truly just if He punishes people for something they were never warned about?

I must start by saying that I do not know for sure ***what happens to those who never heard about Jesus***. The Bible never addresses the question directly, instead concerning itself with people who have heard about Jesus, like you and I here...and *knowingly* reject the gospel message (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9). Only God knows ***what happens to those who have never heard the gospel***.

To be honest, it is not our business to presume that we know the final destiny of any person on earth. It is God’s business. Yet we can have every confidence that our God will do what is right.

A theme woven throughout Scripture is that God is good, God is fair, and God is just. We are called to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and to trust that He will deal with all people in a fair and appropriate manner. As He told Peter when he asked of Him what would happen to John, “What is that to you? Follow Me.” What He was saying, “It is none of your business. Just follow me!” The important question for each of us is not “***What will God do about the men and the women who have never heard about Jesus?***” The important question for each of us is “***What have we done in response to the fact that WE HAVE heard of Jesus?***”

That being said, I would like to share what I believe the Word of God *does* have to say about the question we have before us. Due to the limited time we have, I will give a short answer without a lot of explanation. I would say that these people who have not heard about Jesus are lost people who need the Lord.

They need to hear about Jesus. They need to experience Him through US who have already heard about Jesus and believe in Him. We are called to proclaim the gospel and urge those men and women be reconciled to God, like Paul says in 2 Corinthians, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.”

This means, we, you and I, who have heard the gospel have a mission to share the good news of Jesus Christ we know by words and action. Near and far, people will hear about Jesus we preach and teach here in Kona by our love and the way we live together as God’s family here.

How is God’s family here? Perfect? I wish I could say that Kona United Methodist Church is a perfect church, but it is not. You and I already know about this if we say honestly. God’s family here is made with imperfect persons like you and me. To expect the family made with imperfect people to be perfect is not a reasonable expectation. I have not seen any perfect church in my 18 years of Ordained Ministry in the United Methodist Church.

However, as a consultant of the church I have worked with several churches with some issues. In the consultation process, I have heard people saying their church was so perfect until John and his partner Steve showed up at their church, until the woman Pastor Nancy was appointed to their church, until the little Johnny running around the church unsupervised, and so on. Personally I only saw two churches like these and they were closed not long after that.

No perfect church exists, but healthy churches whose members are imperfect and yet in mutual respect they live together lovingly and harmoniously. ***Those people who still alive and yet never heard about Jesus*** have a chance to hear about Him on earth through this healthy church.

We are a healthy church. We are trying to get healthier each day for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those people who never heard about Jesus. We come to the Table at least once a month here at Kona United Methodist Church confessing our sins in our imperfection and asking God’s forgiveness in His grace to maintain the healthiness in our living together as a community of faith.

[Consecration of the Communion Elements]