

Salvation for All Who Believe

Romans 10:5-17

⁵ Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” ⁶ But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say?

“The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

¹⁴ But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵ And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How

beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” ¹⁶ But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Theme Statement

As we explore Paul’s confidence in the salvation offered in Christ, we feel confidence in our own justification through faith in Christ and joyfully embrace the possibility of salvation for all people.

Exploring the Word

This session’s passage from Romans 10 is part of a broader theological discussion, so it is important to avoid using it as a “proof text” to validate isolated steps in the faith process. Paul integrates several voices from Jewish scripture to present them in new light—the light of Christ. These voices come from Leviticus 18:5, Deuteronomy 30:11-14, Isaiah 28:16, and Joel 2:32. And they impress on us that God “will have mercy on whom [God has] mercy and . . . will have compassion on whom [God] will have compassion” (Romans 9:15; Paul is paraphrasing Exodus 33:19).

Romans 10:5-8 Two roads

When it comes to righteousness, there is a fork in the road. One path is the law; the other, the gospel. The road of the law focuses on one’s actions. The road of the gospel focuses on one’s trust in God.

Obedying Mosaic Law is a way of life, but it is incapable of making one righteous because no human can observe it perfectly. Romans 10:4 declares that “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” Belief or faith is the compass that directs

and leads humankind to righteousness. Yet righteousness is only possible by God's grace.

Romans 10:9 Words from the heart

Intellectual assent, believing "facts," is different from trusting in Christ. Trust is giving up control and giving in to depending on God. All of us naturally want to call the shots, make the decisions, avoid the risks. Believing in Christ is to embrace the Holy Spirit's guidance, even when it seems counterintuitive to our own "wisdom." Does belief come before the verbal confession? For some people, yes. For others, or in other circumstances, we have to make a declaration of trust before we can truly live it out. In the context of the Roman church, confessing Christ had a social cost. Fewer than ten years before Paul wrote his letter, Emperor Claudius expelled the Christians from Rome. In that same period Nero succeeded Claudius. In 64 CE, Nero set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians for it. To name Jesus, not Caesar, as Lord had consequences.

Romans 10:10-11 No, nobody

Again, we remember that belief in Christ is trust in him, not intellectual agreement with what is said about him. While a person cannot solve the problem of their own sin, Christ solves it for them. This is a promise that excludes no one.

Romans 10:12-13 Yes, everybody

Earlier, in Romans 9:25, Paul cites the prophet Hosea: "And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God'" (Hosea 2:23, English Standard Version). Hosea proclaims God's mercy on those who have not obtained it by their own efforts and declares that God has claimed as God's own those who do not know God. It is important to note that Hosea is preaching to Israel, who has wandered

away from its relationship with God. God is the one who restores it.

Romans 10:14-16 Tough questions

These verses are Paul's call to action to the Roman believers. The message of God's love through Christ will never be heard unless they respond to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and go out to make disciples. Paul uses the questions here to set up his call to the believers and leaves it up to them to answer.

Romans 10:17 You have to speak up

People grow in faith, and help others grow, as they hear and speak of the faithfulness of God. Scripture provides many narratives of that faithfulness, and those accounts help believers recognize the hand of God in their own circumstances. When those stories are shared, both from scripture and from the lives of believers, those around are encouraged and look to Christ.

The Word Today

Edith never traveled far from her midwestern hometown. Her life was full of family and friends there, but her experiences were limited. Then, when she was in her seventies, her oldest son and his wife took Edith on a two-week trip to a different part of the country. They saw the ocean, ate fresh seafood, visited orange groves and even a large theme park. Edith's eyes were wide, and she was like a little child experiencing something for the first time. On the way back home, she said, "I could have lived a different life, if only I knew what was possible."

Jean, her daughter-in-law, had traveled regularly with her husband, Edith's son. After his death, she continued to live in a large world, visiting other countries and even teaching English in China for a while. She passed this love for

learning about God's world and God's people on to her grandchildren. Active until her own last day and aware of the medical crisis she faced, she said, "I would like to see more, but I am satisfied with the life God has given me."

How can we know what's possible in life if someone doesn't tell us? And how can someone tell us if they don't know what they have to offer others? Until our eyes are opened, we take for granted the blessings God has put in our lives and the greater blessing of sharing them with others.

Questions for Discussion

Beginnings

1. What does it mean to "hear something"? Is it more perception or understanding?
2. To whom do you go to ask questions about Christianity?

Exploring the Word

1. What do the following verses tell you about God's mercy and the Law in the history of the Israelites?

Leviticus 18:5	Isaiah 28:16
Deuteronomy 30:11-14	Joel 2:32
2. Why do you think Paul, in verse 10, reverses the order of *confess* and *believe* from verse 9?
3. What would the opposite of Romans 10:13 be?
4. Romans 10:8 says, "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart." How does that relate to Jeremiah 31:33?

5. How did God fulfill promises, take care of God's people, perform miracles, and answer prayer in the lives of Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, 18, 21), Deborah (Judges 4-5), Esther (Esther 3, 4, 7), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4-6), Mary (Luke 1, 2), and Peter (Acts 9:36-43; 5:12-21)? How might those narratives inform the lives of the Roman believers?

The Word Today

1. When have you opened up a new way of living for someone else, or when has someone done this for you?
2. Make a chart listing the typical characteristics of teachers, mentors, preachers, salespeople, and each group's typical audience. How does each of these groups bring hope into a conversation?

Closing Prayer

*I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep. . . .
The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore. Psalm 121:1-4, 8*

Further Study

Psalm 86:1-7

Daily Readings

M. Deuteronomy 30:6-14

T. Isaiah 52:1-10

W. Joel 2:28-32

T. Galatians 3:6-14

F. Romans 10:1-4

S. Romans 10:18-21

S. Romans 10:5-17

Memorization

Romans 10:13

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.