

LESSON 13

May 26, 2024

Unit III: Standing in the Faith Hearing and Believing

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deuteronomy 30:11-20

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:1-21

PRINT PASSAGE: Romans 10:1-17

KEY VERSE

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:9, KJV)

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If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Contrast expectations of salvation under the Law versus salvation by grace through faith in Christ.
- Grow in gratitude for the gracious gift of salvation.
- Celebrate salvation by confession and a tangible commitment to God in Christ.

*Key Terms

Believed (verse 16)—Greek: *pisteuó* (pist-yoo’-o): entrusted; had faith in; thought to be true.

Saved (verse 9)—Greek: *sótéria* (so-tay-ree’-ah): delivered; rescued; salvation (i.e., God’s rescue which delivers believers out of destruction and into His safety). (*Pronunciation text wrong on page 347 of Commentary, page 307 of Powerful Preaching Pointers, and page 293 of Targeted Teaching Tips.*)

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

One of the greatest technological advances of modern times is the use of Global Positioning Systems for navigation and mapping. Many automobiles and smartphones now feature applications that give instant access to step-by-step directions to a designated location, with options for selecting the quickest or best route to a given destination. Almost every human activity, from cooking to cleaning, has its share of processes and steps to ensure the best results. In the same manner, most church denominations have identified a series of steps that lead to Christian salvation. This phenomenon



The Biblical Context

Paul, the undisputed author of Romans, devoted the first half of this book to prove the universal need for God's righteousness because of humanity's deliberate rebellion against Him and His moral standards. Paul specifically addressed the Jews in his audience who believed that religiously following the Mosaic Law made them righteous before God. Paul noted that following this path does bring righteousness because it is God's standard. However, the problem is that no one can perfectly keep the Law through human effort—everyone sins and falls short of God's holy standards. For Jewish believers, Paul noted the uselessness of seeking righteousness based on spiritual heritage rather than Christ's sacrifice for sin (see Romans 9). In Romans 10, Paul addressed the Jews' willful unbelief and spiritual ignorance in seeking salvation outside of Christ, and futile efforts to save themselves by establishing their own righteousness.

is not a new development. During the church's infancy, there was ongoing disagreement among Jewish Christians on the correct standard for being recognized as righteous in God's sight. Some Jewish members held tenaciously to the principle that one receives righteousness by observing the tenets and rituals of the Law. Meanwhile, the apostles, specifically Paul, taught that reconciliation and right standing with God was solely a matter of expressing faith in Jesus Christ. Because these early congregations were made up of Jews and Gentiles, this issue was critical to maintaining unity among them. Paul focused on this challenging issue in the first half of his letter to the church of Rome, whose congregation was a mixture of Gentile believers and Jews still tied to Judaism.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Path to Salvation (Romans 10:1-10)

KJV

BRETHREN, MY heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of

God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

NIV

BROTHERS AND sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

5 Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them."

6 But the righteousness that is by 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 deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Paul concludes chapter 9 of Romans by declaring that Israel "had stumbled" over Christ, the source of salvation, by seeking to be saved through observing the Mosaic Law. He begins chapter 10 by expressing his own personal spiritual burden for their salvation. Above all, Paul desired that Israel would be saved by accepting Christ as Savior and Messiah (**verse 1**). Although some Jews accepted the Gospel, the nation as a whole had not. The reason for this failure was their misguided zeal (**verse 2**). Their passion for God was not motivated by full knowledge of Him. For all of their extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, they lacked a relationship with Him. In other words, they knew about Him but failed to get to know Him. Therefore, they attempted to set up their standards for righteousness (**verse 3**). Regrettably, Israel's attempt to establish righteousness through the Law was futile as a nation because no one could keep the Law perfectly, even those who diligently seek to follow it. Paul pointed out that the Christ they had rejected was the intended "end of the law" (that is, the one to whom the Law pointed), because He kept it perfectly (**verse 4**). Therefore, Christ's righteousness is available to everyone who believes in Him. Only through Christ can believers receive right standing with God. Paul further explained the impossibility of finding salvation by keeping the Law (**verse 5**) by quoting Moses' teaching in Leviticus 18:5. This path to salvation is impossible because it requires human effort and demands perfect obedience throughout one's life—an impossible task. No one can do it, because all sin and continue falling short of God's moral standards. In **verses 6-7**, Paul freely quotes Deuteronomy 30:12-14, repeating Moses' instructions to Israel. From this scriptural framework, Paul emphasizes that salvation and blessings were always based on God's grace and obedience by faith. Therefore, Jews didn't have to search for salvation. Even under the Old Covenant they were immersed in the word of faith, and now, again, through

Paul's preaching. They already had God's command in their mouths and hearts if they would receive it (**verse 8**). **Verses 9-10** outline the path to salvation for all believers. In this context, Paul clarifies what Israel must do to receive God's righteousness—confess Christ as Lord with their mouths and believe in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead. However, believing in the heart comes before verbally confessing that belief. The path to salvation is personal and internal. Only the saved can express with their mouths what is in their hearts. Yet, Paul makes the only path to salvation clear: everyone desiring to be saved must believe in their hearts that God raised Christ from the dead and then confess Him as Lord.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why does the simplicity of the path to salvation seem complex and difficult to understand?

The Method of Salvation (*Romans 10:11-17*)

KJV

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

NIV

11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

13 for, "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!"

16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

After clarifying the path to salvation through faith, Paul explains the means and the method through which it is received. Jesus Christ is the means, the object of belief. It is believing in Christ, not keeping the Law, that positions all Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) without distinction to be declared righteous by God (**verses 11-12**). This principle was not new and was verified in the Scriptures (see Isaiah 28:16). The only acceptable method of salvation is calling on the Lord and turning to Him in faith. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 to solidify God's impartiality in accepting everyone who turns to Christ by faith (**verse 13**). Next, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions to reveal the requirements for the point of calling on the Lord. All who seek righteousness in God's sight must respond in genuine faith to the preaching or sharing of the Gospel (**verses 14-15a**). We cannot miss Paul's emphasis on the Word's importance in salvation. Proclaiming the Gospel message is not limited to the pulpit—every believer is responsible for sharing the Gospel with those desiring to be saved. Quoting Isaiah 52:7, Paul indicates that centuries ago, Isaiah prophesied to Israel, foretelling the New Covenant practice of sending messengers with this good news. Those who receive the Good News welcome it joyously (**verse 15b**). Paul climaxes this section by first revealing that despite everything required to bring Israel to salvation, they still did not believe (**verse 16**; see Isaiah 53:1). The nation's tendency toward unbelief was as long as their history as a nation. Yet, Paul concludes that salvation results from hearing and believing the message about Christ (**verse 17**). The church is now commissioned to proclaim that salvation is received only by having faith in Jesus Christ. Because of the confusion that often surrounds this biblical path to salvation, it is vital that the doctrine of salvation is taught effectively, practiced diligently, and demonstrated visibly in the world.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are the challenges to ensuring that people have a full biblical understanding of salvation?

A Closing Thought

It is no secret that disagreement over how salvation occurs exists among believers today. However, Paul presents God's simple path to receiving salvation: confession and faith. Everyone, without exception, must believe in the reality of Christ's resurrection and verbally confess Him as Lord of their lives. The Christian church must proclaim and practice this truth with biblical soundness and without apology so that many will come to know Christ as Savior and Lord.

Your Life

How well do you understand the path and method of salvation? Because each believer is expected to assist the church's effort to reach the lost, commit yourself to learning more about salvation, how it is acquired, and your responsibilities to promote and live it.

Your World!

Paul explicitly emphasized that God's righteousness is for all who desire to receive it. The message of salvation must not be hindered by prejudice, racial and cultural barriers, or

judgmentalism toward those considered unreachable. Consider how your congregation can make nondiscriminatory evangelism a priority ministry.

Closing Prayer

Gracious Father, how blessed and thankful we are that You gave us the opportunity to accept Your Son by faith without regard for our former spiritual status. Please use us now to bring this message to others, especially those whom society or the church has rejected. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion (Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week begins the Summer 2024 quarter, titled "Hope in the Lord." The lesson topic is "Hope amidst Suffering" (Colossians 1:24-29; 2:1-3).

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, May 27	"God's Witnesses"	(Isaiah 43:8-13)
TUESDAY, May 28	"Praise the Lord!"	(Psalm 113)
WEDNESDAY, May 29	"God's Children in Christ through Faith"	(Galatians 3:19-29)
THURSDAY, May 30	"The Lord's Blessing Makes Rich"	(Proverbs 10:19-25)
FRIDAY, May 31	"Your Treasure Is with Your Heart"	(Matthew 6:19-24)
SATURDAY, June 1	"Seek First God's Kingdom"	(Matthew 6:25-34)
SUNDAY, June 2	"Christ, the Most Precious Gift"	(Colossians 1:24-2:3)

Notes
