

Salvation for All Who Believe

Bible Background • ROMANS 10:5–17

Printed Text • ROMANS 10:5–17 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 19:1–14

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXPLAIN Paul's confidence in the salvation offered in Christ, FEEL justified through our faith in Christ, and EMBRACE with joy the possibility for all.

In Focus

For three months, Cathy had been looking for work. She prayed that the Lord would give her a job where she would have the opportunity to share the Gospel with her fellow workers. Cathy was a trained and certified accountant but no doors were opening for her.

One morning, Cathy received a call from a local rehabilitation center that had gotten her name from a former employee. The center was hiring, but not in the accounting department. The personnel director was so impressed by Cathy's work ethic and resume, he asked Cathy if she would be interested in training men and women who had just been released from prison so that they might successfully return to society and work. She asked for a week to consider.

Cathy continued looking for employment in her field, but nothing materialized. After several sleepless nights, Cathy wondered if this assignment was an answer to her prayer. She decided to step out on faith and take the position.

Within the first month, God gave Cathy favor with her supervisor so that she could start a weekly Bible study. More than 75% of the patients attended and Cathy was able to lead many of them to Christ. Nearly everyone Cathy trained was successful in finding good-paying jobs and becoming witnesses for Christ where they worked.

How has God shown you unexpected ways to make a path to share the Gospel with those around you?

Keep in Mind

"For 'Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved'" (Romans 10:13, NLT)

Words You Should Know

A. Heart (Romans 10:6) *kardia* (Gk.)—The center of one's physical and spiritual life

B. Deep (v. 7) *abussos* (Gk.)—A pit of an immeasurable depth used to hold the dead

Say It Correctly

Esaias. eh-SIGH-us.

Midrash. MIDD-rash.

KJV

Romans 10:5 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.

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.

NLT

Romans 10:5 For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands.

6 But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth).

7 And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)."

8 In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach:

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

10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

11 As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

12 Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him.

13 For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

16 But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “LORD, who has believed our message?”

17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

The People, Places, and Times

Word of Faith. The apostle’s letter reaffirms the basic doctrine of salvation by faith—not works—available to Jews and Gentiles alike. He also affirms that preaching as a form of word-of-mouth promotion continues to be a primary way to spread the Gospel and to build a foundation of faith necessary to desire and receive salvation.

Israel in God’s Plan of Salvation. In Romans, the Apostle Paul addresses Israel’s past election, present rejection of the Gospel, and their future salvation. How could God’s promise to Abraham and the nation of Israel remain valid while the nation of Israel as a whole seems to have no part in the spread of the Gospel? Paul maintains that God’s promise to Israel has not failed because the promise was meant only for “true Israel”—meaning, those who were faithful to the promise (see Genesis 12:1-3; 17:19). Paul contends that Israel’s failure to respond to Christ is not due to an unconditional decree of God but to their unbelief and disobedience (see Romans 10:3).

The apostle also affirms that Israel’s rejection is only partial and temporary. The nation will eventually accept God’s salvation in Christ. God has turned Israel’s transgression into an opportunity to proclaim salvation to all the world. Belief in Jesus Christ by a portion of national Israel will take place in the future. The Scriptures are full of promises of the eventual restoration of Israel to God through their acceptance of the Messiah. (See Isaiah 11:10-16.)

What role does the modern nation of Israel have in God’s salvation plan for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’s descendants?

Background

Born a Jew, Paul was highly educated in the Jewish faith and understood the doctrine, teaching, and workings of the Law. His education, training, and love for the Law contributed to his zealous opposition of Christians and their teachings. As a former persecutor of Christians, therefore, he understood how zeal for a cause could turn a person into a murderous opponent.

After his dramatic conversion while traveling to Damascus to detain and imprison Christians (Acts 9), Paul became a defender of the faith he had, up to then, despised. More so, he became the apostle to the Gentiles and the one directly called to reach his former enemies.

In addressing the believers at the church of Rome, Paul confesses his fervent prayer that his Jewish brothers would be saved. He relates that he can “bear record” of their zeal without knowledge, referring to his former anti-Christian activities.

Finally, he makes it clear that the church of Rome should not become cocky in their position in Christ, because God plans to restore a remnant of Israel. Rather, Paul admonishes Gentile believers not to get conceited about their faith in light of Israel's present disobedience.

At-A-Glance

1. We Cannot be Saved by the Law (Romans 10:5)
2. We are Saved Through Jesus Christ, the Only Way (vv. 6-7)
3. We Must Become Christians, but How? (vv. 8-13)
4. We Must Take the Good News to Others (vv. 14-17)

In Depth

1. We Cannot be Saved by the Law (Romans 10:5) Paul enlightens these Gentile and Jewish believers about the futility of trying to be saved by the Law. He shows them and us today that no one can meet such high standards set by the Law and be saved. After all, we are all sinners. He wants us to appreciate that to be saved by the Law, a person would have to live a perfect life and no one but Jesus Christ Himself could do that. Sinning even one time would mean that we would be lost.

Paul explains further that God gave the Law, not to save us, but to show us how guilty we are before a Holy God; to show us our lostness, our dilemma. The sacrificial system of the Law educated people of their need for a lamb without blemish. That lamb is Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:1-4).

Why did God give Moses the Law if it could not save?

2. We are Saved Through Jesus Christ, the Only Way (vv. 6-7) Jesus is the end of the Law. With His death, burial, and Resurrection, He fulfilled the purpose and goal of the Law (Matthew 5:17). Unlike Jesus Christ, however, the Law cannot save anyone. Nothing can bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful man. Receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the only way. The salvation that God offers is a gift and we need to respond and receive it, or be lost forever. God's salvation is right in front of us. Paul emphasizes the closeness of salvation, and how simple God has made it to be restored to Him. Faith in Christ is not too high above us, up in heaven where we cannot reach. It is not down in the depths of the earth, in realms of darkness and death.

3. We Must Become Christians, but How? (vv. 8-13) Sin has cut us off from God, but Paul explains how to get back to God and be saved. It is not a complicated process, but based on a simple faith in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. God said that if we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our heart that God, Himself, raised Jesus from the dead; then we are saved (v. 9). This profession can be made by both Jews and Gentiles alike (v. 12) because with God there is no favoritism when it comes to salvation (Romans 2:11). Paul wanted both Jews and Gentiles to know in this letter that our sins point out our need for a Savior. We need to be cleansed and made whole—and only Jesus can do that.

4. We Must Take the Good News to Others (vv. 14-17) God is calling us to bring the Good News of salvation to others. Through our Christian living, loving, teaching, and preaching; they will know that we follow Christ. If God's Spirit is indeed in us, we will obey this command. If this is not true of us, then we need to examine ourselves seriously before the Word.

As Paul explains the process of calling, believing, hearing, telling, and sending, we understand the large network within the Church that evangelism requires to reach souls for the Gospel. Often we think of evangelism as a task for others with that specific spiritual gift, but everyone in the Church should be using their gifts, time, and talents to further the ultimate goal of evangelism everywhere.

Are all Christians responsible for preaching the Gospel to non-Christians? What does that look like?

Search the Scriptures

1. What must a person believe about God and Jesus to receive salvation (Romans 10:9)?
2. How does God use the preacher (v. 14)? Can just anyone be a preacher (v. 15)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. What kind of preaching do we need in order to build faith?
2. Why does God seem to have a special place in His heart for Israel if He shows no favoritism?

Liberating Lesson

God surely has a sense of humor. Religious, racial, and economic barriers separate people and fuel hatred and discord. But, just when we think we know it all and are better than everyone else, God provides a Damascus Road experience to shed light on our own unrighteousness and neediness. Our perceived enemies today may be our mission fields tomorrow. Jesus died and was resurrected because of God's love for all persons. How does knowing this make it easier to share your faith with nonbelievers?

Application for Activation

There are people all around you who need to hear the Good News of salvation. Determine in your heart and carry out the plan of witnessing to someone in your family, on your job, or in your community. Pray first and ask God to show you someone who needs a Savior and then, help you to find the right time, place, and words to obey His command.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Romans 10:5-17

Paul's letter to the church in Rome is written to speak to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. It is overflowing with the theme of salvation through faith in Christ, and not of works. Paul is addressing Jewish and Gentile Christians, creating an environment of peace and unity rooted in faith in Christ.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. The description the apostle Paul gives of the righteousness of the Law is written in Leviticus 18:5: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them." Paul is speaking of God's command to the people to observe and keep the moral law. The word "righteousness" (Gk. dikaiosune, deekay-oh-SOO-nay) means to be in a condition acceptable to God. Righteousness in the Law is directly related to human works, both external and internal. In the Law, the emphasis is placed on human activity, and righteousness is based on one's actions and deeds. The Law required perfect obedience, something impossible for fallen mankind.

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.) Paul moves his reader from the righteousness of the Law to the righteousness of faith. Paul uses phrases taken from Deuteronomy 30:12-13, inserting commentary in running text with the words of Scripture, as was common in Jewish Midrash teaching. Just as Moses left the Children of Israel without an excuse as they promised to keep God's Law as they prepared to enter Canaan, Paul is leaving both his original audience and his modern-day readers without an excuse. The righteousness of faith is not a mystery. It is not hidden in the heavens, nor is it buried in the deep. The righteousness of faith is not attainable by human actions. It is not necessary or possible for any person to go to heaven or to launch into the deep to bring Christ and have Him revealed. Christ has done all the work necessary for humans to obtain the right standing with God.

Christ descended from heaven, took on human form, and fulfilled all the righteousness of the law by living a life free of sin. He bore the penalty of sin, suffered on the Cross, died, and rose again so that we might be declared righteous, regardless of the sins we have committed.

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; Continuing to echo Moses' words, Paul reminds us that the

word is near us, in our mouth and heart; it is not based on what we will or will not do but is based solely on faith. It is not what we must do, but what we must believe. The mystery of salvation, the righteousness of faith, has been revealed in Christ. “Word” here (Gk. *rhema*, RAY-mah) means that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, the spoken word. The word is the message here. The way of righteousness has come to you. It is not in the Law, works, deeds, or behaviors; but it is in your mouth and in your heart. The word of faith—righteousness based on faith—is what the apostle Paul is proclaiming.

Paul’s message to the church in Rome is equally relevant to the modern Christian regardless of location. We should not focus on outward deeds as a measuring tool for inward righteousness. Our focus on “works” righteousness will prevent us from seeing Christ (Romans 9:32). The message is to believe that God exists, He is the Creator, and that He provides salvation and right standing to His creation through Jesus Christ. This is the message that exceeds time and supersedes context and culture. Our justification and righteousness are rooted in our proclamation with our mouth and our belief in our heart that Jesus is Lord.

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. The Greek word for “saved” is *sozo* (SODE-zo) meaning to save a suffering one from perishing. Notice the difference between the conditions of the Law and the righteousness of faith. The requirements of the Law were impossible. Yet salvation by faith is simple and easily attainable by anyone willing to confess and believe. This inward belief and outward confession speaks to both Jesus as man and Jesus as God. We are not saved by our actions, so there is nothing magical about speaking the words “the Lord Jesus.” Rather, the change comes because, when we confess Jesus as Lord, we must allow Him to reign over us in total. It should also speak of our ability, through Christ, to live a life that represents Christ internally on the inside of us. Our outward life should be a testimony of our inward faith. While we are not perfect, let us continue to press toward perfection in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).

The belief that God raised Jesus from the dead speaks of His triumph over sin, death, and the grave. It grounds Christian belief in the historical fact of the Resurrection, and it affirms God the Father’s complete power and authority over all creation.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Righteousness begins in the heart. It is belief with all your heart that Jesus took on human nature, walked among mankind, lived a life free of sin, died on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead. Belief is the key requirement for God to impart righteousness, right relationship with Him. This belief in our heart is confirmed and reaffirmed by the confession of our mouth.

“Salvation” (Gk. *soteria*, so-tay-REE-ah) means deliverance and preservation. Salvation then comes from God through Christ and is not based on one’s works of righteousness, but through believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth. We must refrain from any attempt to add to the requirements of salvation. Notice it does say that you must not do this, or stop doing that. Salvation is simple and easy and is accessible to even a small child with limited understanding.

The belief in the heart and the confession of the mouth provides the Christian with redemption from the wages of sin and preservation from eternal damnation. The salvation of the Christian is both in the present and the future. The Christian is called to live victoriously and abundantly in this life, and in the life to come.

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.

Paul touts the inclusiveness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “Whosoever” does not omit anyone willing to believe in their heart and confess with their mouth the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The “whosoever” is not contingent upon race, gender, economic status, educational achievements, or human accolades. The “whosoever” bridges the gap between those that “have” and those that “have not.” Paul speaks to both the Jewish and Gentile Christians. Christ is the common denominator and liberates us from the keeping of the Law. Christ moves beyond the Law of Moses and Jewish custom and opens the door for all to access the covenant blessings of God.

Christ is the ultimate example of God’s impartiality toward His creation, and His desire to see all mankind redeemed. God is ready to pour out His abundance upon all those who call upon Him. Verse 13 is taken from Joel 2:32 and is used to show that God is rich in mercy and is ready to receive all who ask and dispense grace and salvation—deliverance from the penalty of judgment.

Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ moved beyond Jewish custom and culture practices. In the same manner, we are unable to earn our salvation through good works, church culture, and tradition. So often the church gets hung up on how one should interact with the world or how one should act in church that they almost seem to add works and requirements to God’s salvation. We must also strive to live a life that represents Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to operate as Lord in and over our life. A life in Christ should differ from a life void of Christ. However, our distance from the world will look different from region to region, from generation to generation, and even from person to person. Christians must be careful to not judge one another based on outward actions.

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! Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and the Resurrection. In order to believe, you must first hear the Gospel. In order to hear the Gospel, it must be preached. Who will preach the Good News for all to hear? Paul’s charge to preach should be embraced by every Christian. Who will be sent to preach, proclaim, and share the Gospel? Anyone willing to go. You don’t have to be a pastor, minister, or special person to share the Gospel, though. Be willing to share your testimony of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to all who will listen. Preaching the Gospel is not limited to the Sunday preacher, for they can only reach those few who will come into the church. Every Christian has a responsibility to share Sunday’s message with the friends, family, and co-workers they encounter throughout the week. The only sermon that

some will hear will be the one you preach. The only Bible that some will read will be the life you live.

We need not be afraid to share the Gospel. Jesus promises to give us the words when we need them. Even if we do not lead people all the way to salvation, we can help them along the way. Remember, what we share is good news. Christian faith is not about limitations and rules; it is about relationship with an amazing God.

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. Not all Jews who heard the message of Jesus Christ embraced and believed unto salvation; neither did all the Gentiles. However, that did not keep Paul and others from preaching the Good News, that Jesus the Messiah had come, died, and rose from the grave. The same is true today. Not everyone who hears the message of Jesus Christ will accept the invitation to salvation. However, that does not relieve us of our responsibility to preach to all we can. We have a commission to spread the Gospel throughout the world (Mark 16:15). Our commission to preach the Good News is independent of the hearers' response to the message preached.

Therefore, if people are going to have faith in God, the message of Jesus Christ must be preached. It is impossible to believe in what you have never heard. Hearing of the Word of God ignites our faith. It is not always a onetime hearing, but it is a continuous hearing of the Word of God that feeds our faith. Whether you are a new convert or a seasoned Christian, it is imperative that your faith is continuously fed the Word of God, and that you may be strengthened on this spiritual journey.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Obey God with Heart and Voice
(Deuteronomy 30:6-14)

TUESDAY

God's Salvation Announced
(Isaiah 52:1-10)

WEDNESDAY

Call on the Name of the Lord
(Joel 2:28-32)

THURSDAY

Gentiles Believe by Faith
(Galatians 3:6-14)

FRIDAY

For the Salvation of the Gentiles
(Romans 10:1-4)

SATURDAY

Regret for Not Hearing Christ's Word
(Romans 10:18-21)

SUNDAY

Salvation Is for All People
(Romans 10:5-17)