

Jake Magee

Message Notes

June 8, 2025

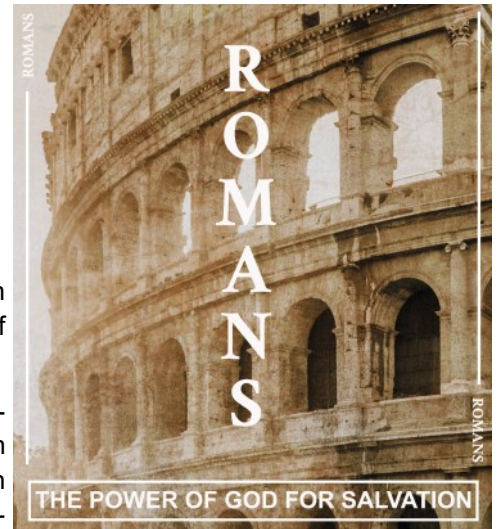


Helping People Believe – Week 2: Preparing Your Mind

Romans 10:3&4

“³For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

The Big Idea: Evangelism can feel intimidating—but what if it starts with understanding how people think? This week, we’ll step into Paul’s classroom in Romans 10 and explore why everyone—religious or not—is obsessed with righteousness. We’ll learn how to recognize this deep need for self-justification, how it often masks a rejection of God’s righteousness, and how only Jesus can provide the cure. Before we speak the gospel with our mouths, we must understand what we’re trying to say with our minds.



Preparing Your Mind

Identify the _____.

Vs. 3 ~ “...seeking to establish their own...”

Expose the _____.

Vs. 3 ~ “...they did not submit to God’s righteousness...”

Offer the _____.

Vs. 4 ~ “Christ is the end of the law of righteousness...”

Small Group Discussion Guide
Helping People Believe – Week 2: Preparing Your Mind
Romans 10:3&4

Getting Started

Before we get into practical steps on evangelism, we must first be clear on *what* we're trying to help people believe—and *why*. On Sunday, we outlined a conceptual framework for evangelism drawn from Romans 10: Identifying the Symptom, Exposing the Root, and Offering the Cure. This week is about helping people think rightly about themselves and Christ. Evangelism isn't just a transfer of information—it's helping people rethink the story they've been telling themselves.

Digging Deeper (Read Romans 10:1–4)

1. Identifying the Symptom - In verse 3, the key spiritual problem Paul identifies is this: *people are “seeking to establish their own righteousness.”* In other words, we all spend our lives trying to prove we're “in the right.”

- On Sunday, we heard that *everyone*—religious or not—is obsessed with righteousness. Even atheists live by a code and justify themselves constantly. How do we see this self-justification in areas like: **marriage; family life; jobs; social media; playgrounds or prison yards; your inner thoughts.**
- **If you're talking with a non-believer**, how might you help them see this tendency in themselves—*without making them defensive*?
- **How does this diagnosis help us set the stage for the gospel?**
- **Bonus Scripture:** Read Romans 2:12–16 and discuss its relevance for our topic.

Pro Tip: When you see someone justifying themselves repeatedly, that's often a sign that they're *not convinced* they are truly in the right. The louder the defense, the deeper the insecurity. Evangelism helps surface this contradiction—and offer real peace.

2. Exposing the Root - Paul explains that although people are zealous for righteousness (v.2), they are *not submitting* to God's righteousness (v.3). That is the root issue.

- How can someone be passionate about being righteous, yet be resisting *true* righteousness at the same time?
- On Sunday, we explored how people **tamper with God's standard** to make themselves look good. Walk through these common tactics: **blame-shifting; minimizing; deflection; denial; victim-playing; comparison**
- What does each reveal about our unwillingness to accept God's authority and standards?
- Why do these tactics not only fail to prove we are righteous—but reveal a deeper rebellion against God?

(2. Continued)

Pro Tip: In Romans 10:3, Paul says people are “ignorant of the righteousness of God.” This isn’t informational ignorance—it’s *volitional*. It’s the blindness that comes from years of twisting the standard (c.f. Eph. 4:18). *Evangelism is often the slow, patient work of helping people see the standard they’ve spent their lives tweaking.*

3. Offering the Cure - In verse 4, Paul says “*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*” That means Christ is both the goal and the fulfillment of everything God’s law requires.

- Why does the gospel seem irrelevant—or even offensive—if people don’t understand their guilt first?
- What are some **inferior gospel presentations** that skip or downplay the seriousness of sin and righteousness?
- Christ is the Cure: He lived the righteous life we failed to live and died the death we deserved for our failure. How does Jesus fulfill both the law’s **commands** and its **consequences**?

Pro Tip: The gospel is not a motivational pep talk. It’s about radical substitution: *Christ succeeds where we fail and suffers where we should be punished.* Until someone stops defending their own righteousness, they won’t embrace their substitute.

Making It Real

Evangelism isn’t just about knowing *what* to say—it’s about helping people unlearn the false story they’ve been living in. And that takes clarity, compassion, and conviction.

Reflect:

- In what areas are *you* still tempted to defend your own righteousness?
- Who in your life needs help seeing that their defenses are not saving them—but enslaving them?

Prayer:

Lord, help us love people enough to tell them the truth—not just that Christ is the Cure, but that without Him we are deeply sick. Give us wisdom to expose the lie gently, and to present Jesus clearly—as the One who justifies the ungodly. Prepare our minds for this mission, and train our hearts to stay soft. Amen.

Resources

Romans: Righteousness from Heaven | R. Kent Hughes

www.blueletterbible.org

www.biblehub.com

www.preceptaustin.org