

Romans 10:1-13

December 29, 2024



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is a tough decision that you had to make recently?

What are some decisions you have enjoyed making?

Every day, we are faced with all sorts of decisions. Sometimes the decisions are small, like what to wear or what to eat. And sometimes the decisions are bigger, like which job to take or where to go to college.

Today we are going to practice making decisions by playing "Would You Rather".

WOULD YOU RATHER...

Eat a piece of cake or a cupcake?

Be a bird or a bat?

Explore space or the ocean?

Live on Mars or the moon?

Have many good friends or one very best friend?

Go without TV or junk food for a year?

Be able to breathe underwater or fly in the air?

Have a puppy or a kitten?

Eat pizza or a burger?

Have fun with friends or hang out with your family?
Go to a game or a movie?
Spend 30 minutes in a room with a rat or full of spiders?

Teaching Moment:

As a child, decision making is not something that you probably practiced all that frequently. As you get older, the decisions you make have bigger consequences and you need to make good decisions.

This life is full of decisions, but the most important one deals with our state in eternity.

DISCUSSION

 HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 10:1-3.

How do you define “zeal”?

What do you think it means to be zealous for the Lord?

Where in our culture do we often see zeal without knowledge?

The Jewish people of Paul’s day had a great zeal for God, so why didn’t they already have salvation? Because their zeal was “not according to knowledge.” The Jews believed they had good standing with God because of the law, their religious traditions, and their religious activity. They were sincere in their endeavors, but their sincerity was tragically misplaced. No matter how hard they tried, they could never be good enough to earn favor with God.

Can a person know about God, and even Jesus, and still not experience salvation? How?

They weren’t alone in their zeal without knowledge. At the core of most religions is the belief that people are basically good and can work their way to God. Even in the church, a lot of people fill their lives with religious activities and good morals, thinking these things will give them a connection to God. But being a religious person is not enough.

Paul drew attention to righteousness in these verses, which refers to a person being right in reference to the standard of God. What are some ways that people try to “establish their own righteousness” today?

This is what makes Christianity unique. Christianity focuses on what Jesus did; other religions focus on what we should do. God came down to earth in the

Person of Jesus and lived a sinless life. In His perfect righteousness He took our sin on Himself, willingly went to the cross, and died in our place. Then He rose three days later from the grave, having defeated sin and death. For this reason, there is no other way of salvation; Christ alone saves. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Christians have been saved because of the blood of Christ. If that weren’t amazing enough, when we trust Jesus for salvation, His righteousness is credited to our account. No one else can do this for us. No one else died to save us. Christ alone saves.

🌿 HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 10:8B-10.

What are the implications of confessing Jesus as Lord?

Confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord.” To confess something means literally “to speak the same thing.” The word “Lord” comes from the Greek word kurios, which signifies Jesus’ sovereign power and authority. So, when we confess, we are agreeing with God that Jesus is the sovereign Lord with authority over all—including our lives. We further agree with God by living in submission to the rule of Jesus.

Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. To believe in the death of Jesus doesn’t go far enough. I know Jesus is Lord because even death cannot hold Him. He died for me, but He is alive because God raised Him. Without the resurrection, Jesus would have been just a really good man who died a very tragic death. The fact that separates Jesus from all other religious leaders is that Jesus died and rose from the dead—and is alive today. God approved of Jesus’ sacrifice by raising Him from the dead, and He is the One and only Lord.

Confess and believe. We shouldn’t view these as two separate actions. One is an inward belief and the other is an outward confession, but you really can’t have one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. When you fully believe in your heart, you can’t help but confess and live out that belief.

Confessing and believing are not a form of “easy believism.” Far from it. “Easy believism” teaches grace without repentance, salvation without commitment. Many want Jesus to save them from hell, but they don’t want to live their lives for Him. But we can’t accept Jesus as our Savior without embracing Him as Lord.

Submitting to Christ’s lordship is essential for salvation. When we confess Christ as Lord, we are essentially saying: “Jesus, You alone are king. You alone have all power. You alone are my Master. Therefore, I surrender to You. My life is no longer mine—it’s Yours.”

What makes salvation both easy and difficult?

 HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 10:11-13.

Who is able to confess and believe in Jesus?

The gospel is for all people. The word “everyone” demonstrates the openness of God’s call to salvation. God makes no distinction between people; He desires for all people to be saved. Salvation is available for all people regardless of ethnicity, race, or background. The only requirement is that every individual must trust in Christ to receive that salvation. God’s salvation is for all people by grace through faith in Christ.

God responds to everyone, not just certain people, such as the Jews or those who are especially upright or religious. God extends all the blessings of living in His presence to everyone who calls on His name.

Those who call on the name of Jesus are changed, regardless of who they are (or who they used to be). The gospel extends around the world to save everyone.

Any of us can come to faith in Christ—and we can share that faith with anyone. And we must share our faith. Because salvation in Christ is the only hope for a lost world.

GOING DEEPER

What can we learn about God in this passage?

What would you say to someone who insists that this message of righteousness by faith alone is just too simple, that there has to be more we have to do to earn God’s love?

APPLICATION

We all struggle to earn our righteousness before God; it’s an inevitable aspect of our fallen nature. What is one way you have fallen into this trap recently?

How has your understanding of Jesus’ nature and identity changed over the course of your life?

If you have not yet believed in Jesus and confessed Him as Lord, do so now. Trust Him for forgiveness from your sin. Turn to Him for a new life.

PRAYER

Pray for those you know and love who are not saved from their sins according to Romans 10. Ask God to give you the opportunity to share your faith with others who are not Christians, and pray for a zealously for the gospel.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we resume our study of Daniel.

January 5, 2025 --- Daniel 4:1-37

COMMENTARY

ROMANS 10:1-13

10:1. Paul saw no contradiction between election and prayer. Only a sovereign God, who has rights to move unilaterally in the affairs of humanity, can answer prayer. Among unbelievers we do not know beforehand who is elect and will come to faith upon hearing the gospel, but we can know that “God our Savior... wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Tim 2:4). Paul therefore prayed for Jewish salvation, and we must be diligent to share the good news of Jesus with everyone. It is never proper to give up on someone as “non-elect.”

10:2-3. Both zeal and true knowledge are necessary if one is truly to know God and serve Him. In his zeal as a non-Christian Pharisee, Paul (then called Saul) persecuted the church (Ac 22:3-5). Likewise, zeal among unbelieving Jews led to Jesus' unjust execution. In spiritual blindness they not only missed God's way of righteousness, they opposed it.

10:4. Christ is the end of the law in being both its fulfillment and its termination. Any system of salvation based on performance is excluded.

10:5-7. Paul quoted Moses on both sides of the issue. In Leviticus 18:5 (cp. Gal 3:12) obedience to the law brings life, but no one can keep the law and gain righteousness (as implied by Paul's citation of Moses in v. 6). Faith-based righteousness is from Christ. He is accessible. He died for us and was raised

from the dead. Moses pointed out that God's revelation was accessible, and Paul quoted his words to show that Christ is accessible.

10:8. The nearness of the message of faith is at the heart and mouth of people, just as Moses proclaimed the nearness of God's revelation.

10:8-11. These verses deal with "the word of faith." Verse 9 says what it is; verse 10 explains it; verse 11 offers assurance of its veracity based on a promise from the Old Testament. The word of faith is not a word in the literal sense, but is a "message"—essentially a condensed summary of the gospel. It is the message that a person must receive in order to become a Christian. Specifically, in the case of Israel, it is a message that hits at the heart of their religious beliefs. "Jesus is Lord" is thought to be the oldest Christian confessional statement, and as such was a clear expression of the deity of Christ. Lord (kurios) was the Greek word used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translate the Hebrew "Yahweh," the personal name of God, sacred to the Jews.

For a Jew to confess "Jesus is Lord" would be to ascribe deity to Jesus of Nazareth, the very source of the Jewish outrage that led to his crucifixion in Jerusalem. There is no mistaking Paul's intent in formalizing the requirement for salvation when speaking of a Jewish nation locked in unbelief (though the same formula of faith existed for Gentiles; see 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11). Jesus was the "stone" which Israel had stumbled over just twenty-five years earlier in Jerusalem, the stone that was still squarely in the middle of their path.

But confessing Jesus is Lord is not the whole gospel. In fact, it is the outward, public manifestation of a heart-held belief. Thus comes the other half of the word of faith, affirmation that Christ had indeed been resurrected from the dead. The resurrection was an essential part of apostolic preaching in the early days of the gospel ministry and became a central part of Paul's teaching to the churches. It is interesting to compare the apostle Paul's consistent emphasis upon the resurrection as a validating factor for the Christian faith. Indeed, if there is no resurrection, there is no Christianity.

What the heart believes, the mouth confesses. Belief and confession are like faith and works—the truly saved will always ultimately manifest a complementary expression of their new life in Christ. Faith can give way immediately to confession as it did with the apostle Paul (Acts 9:20-22), or it may come slowly as with some Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus but were bound by fear (John 12:42). Ultimately, however, Jesus Himself indicates that confession of our faith is a requirement, even in the face of impending persecution (Matt. 10:32-33).

Paul's language here has confused some people over what one must do to be saved. Ultimately, there is only one thing: believe (Gen. 15:6). But here Paul says two "things" must be done: confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in the resurrection. But other passages would suggest that repentance, baptism, being born again, entering the kingdom, and having faith are all required. They are and they are not. They are in the sense that every true Christian will have done them all. They are not unless the one element—faith—is present.

Paul's paralleling of justification with salvation is not a word game or a play on words. We are justified by our belief in the person and work of Christ (represented here by the resurrection), but we are saved—confirmed in our faith and carried to the portals of the kingdom of God—by the outworking of our faith (here represented by confession). One cannot choose justification (belief) without salvation (confession), or vice versa. Unless God's providence directs otherwise (witness the thief), the normal Christian life is lived under the power of both. Finally, Paul comes full circle on his quotation from Isaiah 28:16 in Romans 9:33 by citing again the last part of verse 16. To stumble over the stone which is Christ is to fall into unbelief; to embrace the stone (believe and confess) is to have security forever.

10:12-13. Paul has finished comparing righteousness by the law with righteousness by faith. The evidence is that, just as in the Old Testament when God made His will readily available to Israel so that they might embrace it and live by it, so God has made His will available "today." And His will for everyone, Jew and Gentile, is faith in Christ. Here Paul concludes with a promise from the Old Testament, from Joel 2:32.

Given Paul's clear teaching that all, without exception, have sinned (Rom. 3:23), it is only consistent that God's salvation should come to all (Rom. 3:22). Remembering that the mission of Israel was to receive salvation from God and then be "a light for the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23) also substantiates the expansion of Joel's prophecy to include the Gentiles. This is another example of the Old Testament prophets not fully realizing the extent of what they wrote, which necessitated the revealing of the mystery of Jews and Gentiles being brought together in one body.

Though Paul does not use the word, Joel's prophecy was a promise (Acts 2:39). In this section directed at Israel's unbelief, Paul is promising Israel that the gospel is accessible to them; they can believe it; it will save them forever—they will be saved if they call on the name of the Lord. The irony of this entire passage is that while the task was originally to get the Gentiles included in what Israel was given, now the tables have turned. It is Israel who needs to be included in what the Gentiles are readily accepting.