

Romans #21
The Preaching of Salvation
Romans 10:11-17

“Have you seen my glasses? I just had them here somewhere. What? They’re on my head? Oh, thanks.” **Have you ever frantically searched for something that was right by you all the time - like your glasses perched on your head, a pencil behind your ear, or a wallet in your coat pocket?** Such a panicky search at best will make you feel foolish; at worst it can be quite traumatic.

Another kind of frantic search that can not only cause trauma, but end in tragedy is the search for salvation. Many people search high and low for salvation never realizing its right by them. They spend years reading books, comparing religions, and even embarking on costly pilgrimages to find the answers to life when in reality the truth was always near them. **Perhaps that even describes you.** If you are on a search for salvation the Apostle Paul has something to say to you. **You don’t need to make a Herculean effort to find it. Salvation is near you – it’s in His Word, and it’s in your words.**

In chapters 9 and 10 of his letter to the Romans, Paul laments the fact that many of his own people, the Jews, God’s chosen people, were not members of God’s kingdom. The reason for that was that many had refused to believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world. Many Jews had rejected Jesus because they were looking for salvation in the laws and commands that God had given to Moses instead of in the promises that God has given to us in Christ. **Paul explained their position this way in Romans 10:1-4,** “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”

As we saw in our last study, there is a huge difference between the law and the gospel. The law demands while the gospel promises. **Paul explained the difference between the two this way in verses 5-9,** “Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law, The man who does these things will live by them. 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) “or Who will descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The law demands that we work for our salvation, putting heaven out of our reach. The gospel's message, however, brings salvation to us by telling us who Jesus is and what he has done. That is why we can say that salvation is near - it's found in God's Word, the Word that tells you about Jesus.

God's Word that leads to salvation teaches us that Jesus is Lord. That's more than just saying that Jesus was a swell guy and a good teacher. It is saying that Jesus is God. **Many people think that it is foolish to believe that Jesus is God but it is really the other way around.** It is foolish not believe that Jesus is God because otherwise his death on the cross would be worthless. Had he just been a man Jesus' death could not have paid for the sins of the whole world. **It would be like trying to put out a 5-alarm fire with a garden hose.** You need more power than a man has to put out the fires of hell.

Not only do we learn from the Word that Jesus is Lord, we also learn that he was raised from the dead and that assures us that we too shall rise on the last day. We can be certain that Jesus was raised from the dead because we have eyewitness accounts of his resurrection. Those eyewitnesses are trustworthy because they were once skeptics themselves. **Think of Thomas.** He refused to believe that Jesus had risen until he could actually put his hands in Jesus' nail marks. Thankfully for us Jesus did appear to Thomas and allow him to check out his hands and his side. **But it wasn't just Thomas who was the skeptic.** All the disciples had doubted. They had at first refused to believe the women's report of the angels at the tomb and how Jesus had appeared to them. They too only believed after Jesus himself appeared to them behind the locked doors.

Yes, salvation is near us because the way to heaven is recorded for us in the Word. But just to know what the Bible says does not lead to salvation. Paul said in Romans 10:10 that we are saved by believing and confessing the truth, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." Salvation is near us because it's not just in the Word but it's in our words of faith.

Now before you think that I am implying that we have some hand in our salvation let's take a look at the role our faith plays. Faith is not the cause of salvation - Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is. Faith is simply the vehicle that makes Jesus' gift of forgiveness our own. **Think of it this way.** If you received an injection that saved you from a rare disease you would not say that the needle used in the injection saved you. No, the medicine saved you but the needle made it possible for the medicine to enter into your body and work. **That is what faith is like.** Faith is the needle through which God's life-saving gift of forgiveness becomes ours.

Wouldn't that still seem to imply that we had something to do with our salvation? After all if we don't have faith we can't receive God's gift of forgiveness right? Well, yes that's true but Ephesians 2:8 says that even faith is a gift from God. Remember, in Romans 10:17 Paul said, "Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ." **Faith is born in us when God's Word goes to work in our hearts.**

Look at verses 11-17, "For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on him will not be ashamed. 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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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? 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! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Paul reminds us in verses 12-13, "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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Let me remind you of the words found in Acts 10:34-35, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And then, of course, John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Never let us forget that God, through Jesus Christ, has provided for us a "whosoever" salvation. It does not matter how much money you have, it does not matter the color of your skin, it does not matter how good or how bad you might have been, the Bible very plainly teaches that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Notice, then, the problem that we are faced with in verses 14-15, "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 with a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

The Word of God very plainly tells us that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But now the question comes, "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" And "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" **In other words, the lost person cannot**

believe the Gospel until he hears the Gospel! Therefore, the conclusion is this: **hearing precedes believing, and hearing and believing precede one's "calling."** And that is the reason that we have been told in verse 17, "So, then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

It is clear that God's plan for spreading the Gospel is through preaching, as seen in 1 Corinthians 1:18-21, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, (but) it pleased God (that) by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

But what are we to preach? 2 Timothy 4:2 gives us the answer, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." We have this assurance in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And then in 2 Peter 1:21 we have been told, "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." And Paul gives us his concept of preaching in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." **I am convinced that God called men preach the Word of God without compromise and/or apology.** And I am convinced that the preacher who denies the Virgin birth, the blood atonement, and the resurrection is not a true minister of the Gospel, but is a disciple of Satan.

In addition to the Word of God being without error and infallible, there are at least three reasons that preachers ought to preach the scriptures.

First, the preaching of the Word of God brings conviction. We are told that on the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and Acts 2:37 gives us the results, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts..." By hearing the Word of God, the sinner recognizes the fact that he needs a Savior, and John 3:3 says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Second, the preaching of the Word of God brings conversion. Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth..." Ephesians 1:12-13 says, "That

we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ; in whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” **After hearing the Word of God and believing that Jesus is able to supply his needs, the lost person calls on Christ for salvation.**

Third, the preaching of the Word of God brings concern. The Jews in Peter’s day, after hearing the Gospel, asked this question in Acts 2:37, “Men and brethren what shall we do?” **Churches become involved in missionary work because of the preaching of the Word of God.** Churches become involved in soul-winning because of the preaching of the Word of God. Churches become involved in Bible study because of the preaching of the Word of God.

Let me close by giving you the invitation of Jesus, as seen in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” **Ladies and gentlemen, salvation cannot be bought, it cannot be earned, it is a gift of God.** The only way the world will ever know the way to salvation is through the preaching of the Word of God.