

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

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1/22/2022

Romans 10:8b-13 “What’s the Good News?”

Intro. From time to time we hear about some tragedy that has taken place. We keep hearing of mass shootings, including one last night that killed 10. We hear about an earthquake that has killed thousands of people in China or Pakistan. Perhaps we hear about a famine in Africa which takes the lives of thousands each year, including little children. Various diseases claim millions of lives each year. In fact, we have just been through the worst pandemic in over 100 years. We read about the tens of thousands of alcohol and drug related deaths each year, taking the lives of many of our younger generation. How tragic it is that thousands of children are the victims of sexual or emotional abuse. On top of all that, one million abortions are performed each year in America. Our world is full of bad news.

Yet the greatest and most fundamental tragedy of all is the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. That resulted in the sinful condition of mankind which in turn has led to great sorrow and death. We were created in the image of God and were even endowed with many of the attributes of God. We were created in paradise. But from such a high and noble position in God’s paradise, man has fallen. Man was created to have fellowship with God, but now man is alienated from God and man. In some of our major cities we vividly see the sinfulness of man manifested. We see violence, perversity, theft, and various forms of abuse. We see corruption in government and business. What a tragic fall!

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he establishes the tragic condition of man in the opening chapters. In chapter 3 Paul establishes the universality of sin. All have sinned. There is none righteous. It is a problem that we all have. Then Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death....” We must conclude that sinners are lost and under the death sentence of a holy God.

Well, I have some good news. There is an answer to man’s tragic condition. God offers salvation from sin. In fact, Paul makes four references to salvation in the first 13 verses of this chapter (vv.1b, 9b, 10b, 13b). Yet the question is who can be saved and how can we be saved? Many foolishly believe that government has the answer to so many of our problems. Though government has a God-given role of restraining evil, it cannot solve the fundamental problems of man. The answer is to be found in the heart of God. The love of God gives us hope that He is willing and able to save us from our sinful condition. Paul spoke of this love in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.” The good news is that God loves us and sent His Son to die for us and to bear away the curse of sin from us. Christ is the answer to the sin problem of man. And as we see from v.12, the salvation that God offers does not just save us from the consequences of sin. God’s salvation also *richly* bestows many blessings. He will give us love, joy, and peace. He will save us from the power of sin and transform our lives. Thus, we begin to regain what we lost in the fall of man.

Could it be that some in my audience need to be saved? And for those of us who are already saved, we need to be able to share God’s plan of salvation with others. So let me share with you a few thoughts about the good news of this offer of salvation. First of all,

I. SALVATION IS OFFERED TO EVERYONE

Today, we take this wonderful truth for granted, but the Jew of Paul's day had a hard time accepting this truth. So Paul quotes from their own Scriptures. Look at vv.11-13, "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'" Two times in these verses we find the word, "Whoever." Literally it (πας ... ος) can be translated, "Everyone who." *Everyone* is invited to call upon the Lord and be saved. None are excluded.

Now the basis of that truth is set forth in v.12, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek..." Salvation is not just for the Jews, His chosen people. After all, back when God chose Abraham, He declared 4 times that in Abraham's seed *all* the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 28:14). And note Paul's argument here. He says there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, for there is just One Lord for *all* men. Can't we agree that there is only One God? This means that there is not one Lord and Savior for Americans and another Lord and Savior for those of Africa or China. Now if each people group had their own god, then there would indeed be different ways of salvation as determined by each god. But since there is only One Lord, who is as Paul says "Lord of all" (v.12; Acts 10:35-36), there is only one way of salvation. There is not one way for the Jew and another way for the Gentile. As Paul says there is "no distinction." Jesus is the way of salvation, and He will save anyone who looks to Him. None are excluded due to ethnicity or race or any other earthly distinction that we make. ★The same God who created all people offers salvation to all people.

So we read in v.13 that whoever believes and whoever calls upon the Lord can be saved. Even so, Jn. 3:16 says, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Rev. 22:17 also says, "...Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." That "whoever" includes me and it includes you. Yet if I had read in v.13 that if Steve Felker calls upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved, I would be less sure that that included me. For even though there are only a few people named Steve Felker in this world, still, I could have feared that the verse referred to some other Steve Felker. But when the offer of salvation is to *all* who call upon the Lord, then I can get in on that offer, and you can too.

There was a time in our history that certain products and services were offered to "whites only." An entire race of people was excluded. I'm glad God is not like that. His salvation is available to all.

So no matter who you are or what you have done, you are invited to be saved. Let no one think that you are excluded from the offer of salvation for any earthly reason. You are included in the word "whoever." Aren't you glad that God offers salvation to all?

This truth also applies to our missionary task to take the gospel to all people and nations. If the gospel is for whoever believes, then we are to offer the gospel to all nations and people groups.

So we see in our text that God offers salvation to everyone. Now notice secondly:

II. IT IS OFFERED IN SIMPLICITY

This is another reason why I know God wants all to be saved; he made it simple enough for everyone to understand. He also made the way of salvation accessible. Look at v.8, "But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith

which we preach).” One does not have to ascend to heaven or plumb the depths of the sea to discover the way of salvation. It has been revealed to us and it is not complicated. Because of the great simplicity of the Gospel, the way to God is accessible to all. By the way, in the context of that quotation from Deuteronomy 30, Moses sets before the people the choice between life and death, good and evil. Today, the same choices are set before you, but I would add that you also have the choice between God’s grace and your guilt. Even in Moses day he assured them that the right choice was attainable.

I believe my text sets forth the simple steps of salvation. I will not follow the order that Paul gives them. The order that Paul followed in v.9 is simply an effort to follow the order of the words in the quotation of v.8. I will follow a more logical order. First of all, to be saved, you must:

A. Believe in Your Heart – Paul says in the last of v.9 that “if you ... believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Then in the last of v.8 Paul speaks of the “word of faith,” that is the message about faith in Christ (objective genitive). We are not saved by good works or religious rituals, but by faith. You need to understand that the first step of salvation is to believe and trust in Jesus, and the salvation He offers. All of us can believe, from the child to the aged adult. We exercise faith in other realms of life every day. Furthermore, God can certainly help us to exercise faith in Jesus (see Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 6:63-65; Acts 13:48; 18:27; 1 Cor. 2:14; Hebrews 12:2).

Now notice 2 particular points we can make about faith from this text of Scripture. First we see:

1. The Realm of Belief - Notice in v.9 that you must believe “in your heart.” A head belief is not enough. Mental assent is not enough. James 2:19 says, “You believe that there is one God; you do well. The demons also believe, and tremble.” The devil himself believes in God with his mental faculties. So we must not only believe with our heads, but also with our hearts. Paul affirms this further in v.10, “For with the heart man believes unto righteousness....”¹ Note also the parallelism in v.10 between righteousness and salvation. There is no salvation apart from receiving the righteousness of God by faith, and true faith must be exercised in your heart. In the Bible the heart refers to the seat of man’s inmost thoughts, one’s inmost being, the depth of the soul. Make sure you have believed in your heart. So your whole inner being should be involved in committing yourself and trusting yourself to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And that leads to:

2. The Object of Belief - Paul takes for granted in v.9 that the person has heard about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, for he says in the middle of v.14, “And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” So our faith must be placed *in Jesus*, and what He did to save us. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 says in part, “...I declare unto you the gospel...by which...you are saved...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again...” The only way we can be forgiven is for sin to be paid for. As we have seen, the wages of sin is death. We deserve death. Ezekiel 18 says, “The soul that sins shall die.” But Jesus, the sinless Son of God, died in our place. He paid our sin debt.

The one fact that Paul mentions in particular is the requirement to believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead. Because of the influence of Greek philosophy, that was very difficult for some to believe in that day. Greek philosophy viewed the body as evil and the spirit of man as good. So they were reluctant to believe in the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus. But faith in His

¹ Vv.9-10 contain a chiasm “mouth...heart...heart...mouth” (Moo, p.332).

resurrection is essential, for it proves that He did not die because He was a sinner. Instead, He died *for* sinners. The resurrection also proved that Jesus is the Son of God (1:4). He conquered death for you and me and lives forevermore! Jesus said, “Because I live, you shall live also” (Jn. 14:19). What wonderful assurance this gives us as we face death, or the death of a Christian loved one.

So Paul teaches that we must believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Savior, and God raised Him from the dead. The first step of salvation is faith *in Jesus*. True saving faith also has an element of commitment to the person we place our faith in.

We can compare placing our faith in Jesus to make a trip on a jet. There are several things involved: you must get a ticket, you must get to the airport on time and you must believe that modern jet with its technology and power will safely get you where you want to go. But all of that alone will get you nowhere. There is something else you must do to actually make the trip. What is that? You must trust the jet and the crew enough *to board* it. You must literally commit your life to that plane. That’s how you must respond to Jesus. The only way Jesus can make a difference in your life is for you to totally trust Him, committing the salvation of your soul to Him alone.²

Have you placed your faith in Jesus? If so, you have taken the first step. Now once you believe, the second step is this:

B. Call Upon the Lord Jesus – Paul says beginning in the last of v.12, “the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved’” (-v.13). There he quotes from Joel 2:32. So once you hear the facts of the Gospel, and you believe those facts and commit yourself to Jesus Christ, then we are to call upon Jesus Christ in prayer, who is our Savior and Lord, to give us this salvation that He offers. This order of events is confirmed in v.14, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”

Calling upon the Lord is a very easy thing isn’t it? It’s easier than picking up the phone, dialing a number and calling someone. Better yet, when you call on God, you don’t have to dial a number and you never get a busy signal! One verse in the Old Testament that ties v.13 and with v.9 is Jer. 29:12-14. “Then you will call upon me...when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you.”

Calling on the Lord is one expression of prayer. But that phrase means more than just praying to the Lord. Three times in the life of Abraham we find him calling on the name of the Lord. In each case he does it standing at the altar of sacrifice. When Elijah called upon the Lord on Mt. Carmel, he too did so at an altar of sacrifice. So Paul is not simply saying that whoever *prays* to Jesus Christ will be saved. It refers to a person who abandons all hope of saving himself, and instead calls upon Jesus Christ, the One who died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

And again, the fact that we are to call upon the “name” of the Lord clarifies further what this means. In Scripture a name is not merely a means of identification. The name refers to what that name stands for. The name Jesus means, “The Lord saves.” Christ means “Anointed One” and refers to the Messiah who would come to be our Savior and King. “Lord” means master, sovereign. To be saved, you must call upon Jesus, with the recognition and belief in the fact that He is the Savior God has sent and that He is now your Lord.

Toward the end of my message, I will invite you to bow your head and call upon Jesus to save your soul. Won’t you believe the promise of God, and call on Jesus today? So once you

² Adapted from Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, *Continuing Witness Training Apprentice Manual* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, 1982), 80.

have believed in Jesus, and called upon Him to save your soul, then you should know what is expected of you next:

C. Confess with Your Mouth – This is one of the conditions of salvation mentioned in v.9, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus....” We are to make a public confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are to confess what we believe in our hearts. The word “confess” literally means to “say the same thing;” thus “agree with.” You must agree with what? There is one thing in particular that is mentioned and that is that Jesus is Lord. He is Lord of all, as v.12 states (cf. 14:11; Php. 2:11). Thus, you agree that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over all humanity. This also implies that you recognize His deity. In fact, no Jew who had *not* trusted Christ would confess Jesus as Lord, for the Greek word translated “Lord” is used of God in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX). Furthermore, you agree that He is Lord of *your* life. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” That is accepting His Lordship. We are to deny self, follow Jesus, and obey Him. I believe that repentance of sin is included in accepting and confessing the Lordship of Jesus over your life. Have you given evidence that Jesus is Lord of your life, beginning with a public confession? Bearing witness of our faith is a fundamental responsibility of each Christian. Confession is one way we give glory to God for His saving grace and His resurrection power. We are also to live in daily obedience to Christ.

This step of salvation was often costly to people in Paul’s day. We read in John 9:22 and 12:42 that if a Jew confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, they were put out of the synagogue and Jewish society. Within a few years after Paul wrote Romans, the Emperor Nero required everyone to burn incense at an altar, worship him and say, “Caesar is Lord.” Christians were persecuted and even put to death because they could only confess, “Jesus is Lord.” Confession that Jesus is Lord has cost many Christians so much, yet in comparison, it costs *us* so little. In spite of that fact, so many still will not confess that Jesus is Lord. Have you?

Even though making a confession of faith can be costly or make you nervous, don’t try to bypass this step of salvation. After all, Paul makes confession so important that he links it with salvation, both in vv.9 and 10. Granted, this is the only place where Paul mentions confession as a requirement of salvation, but Jesus also emphasized the importance of confessing Him in Mt. 10:32-33. But if you have *truly* believed in your heart, then you *will* make a public confession of your faith in Christ. Jesus said in Luke 6:45, “For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Confession with the mouth is an evidence of the genuineness of faith, just as good works likewise do so (James 4:17-22). Also, the confession “Jesus is Lord” cannot be sincerely made without the aid of the Holy Spirit, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:3. If you have not confessed your faith in Christ and followed Him in baptism, I do not believe you can have any assurance of salvation.

Jesus was willing at the right time to make a public confession of His identity, even before His enemies, and even though it would cost Him His life (Mk. 14:61-62; Mt. 27:11; 1 Tim. 6:13). He publicly carried out His saving work. Died a shameful and painful death in a highly public place along a well-traveled road leading into Jerusalem. Since He did that for you, you should be willing to confess Him publicly. This is not to say that the mere outward act of confession will save if it is not based on faith within the heart.

The application of this verse to new Christians is obvious. But I also want to make application to those who are already Christians. I do not believe that this confession should necessarily be just a onetime thing at your baptism or inside the walls of the church building.

That's a good place to start, but everyone should know where you stand with Jesus Christ. If your friends and neighbors and work associates do not know that you are a Christian, then you are living on a sub-normal level of Christianity. How can you be a witness to them if you hide the fact that you are a Christian?

So we have seen that salvation just requires following some simple steps: commit your life to Jesus in faith, call upon His name to save your soul, and confess Him publicly as Savior and Lord. A child can do that!

Dr. W.A. Criswell was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. He was my pastor for a few years. Somebody sent word to a preacher friend of Dr. Criswell, saying: "There is a thirteen-year-old boy in the hospital who is dying. Would you go tell him how to be saved?" After arriving at the hospital, the preacher put his head under the oxygen tent with the boy and said, "Son, they tell me that you know that you are not going to live." "That is right; I am going to die," the boy replied. Then the pastor said, "They tell me that you are not a Christian—you are not saved." "That is right," the boy said. "I have never been saved." "Son, I want to tell you how to be saved. I want to tell you how to die. I want to tell you how to meet God." The pastor read to him some simple Scripture passages on how to be saved, including Romans 10:13. The boy broke in, and looking into the face of the pastor in astonishment, said, "Is it that easy?" The pastor replied: "Son, it is easy for you, but not for Jesus. You see, He took our sins and bore them in His own body on the cross. He suffered in our stead. By His stripes we are healed." So hearing the gospel, that 13-year-old boy was saved.³

Salvation is indeed not difficult to understand. If you will follow the simple steps of salvation that I have just given you, you will be saved. Will you put your faith in Jesus, who died for your sins? Will you call upon Him in prayer, and ask Him to save your soul, and give you eternal life? Will you step out and confess Him as Lord and Savior today? I will give you that opportunity in just a moment.

We have seen that this story of salvation involves a Great Offer. Salvation is offered to all, it is offered in simplicity, and thirdly it is:

III. AN OFFER THAT'S "GUARANTEED"

Paul says in v.11, "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame⁴.'" (See also 1 Pet. 2:6). The word translated "be put to shame" (*kataischuno*) can also be translated "disappointed." In fact, back in Rom. 5:5 Paul said that our Christian hope "does not disappoint." (See also 9:33). Our hope and faith will not end in the shame of disappointment.

Have you ever sent off for one of those TV offers, and when you received it, you were very disappointed? The promises made about the product turned out to be empty. Furthermore, people can sure disappoint us at times.

But God's offer of salvation is sure. Those who put their trust in Christ need not fear that their faith in Him will prove to be ill-founded. That's because the promises of God are sure due to His truthfulness and power. If you follow the steps of salvation, God will certainly do His part and keep His promises. Furthermore, I like the certainty of vv.9 & 13 where it says that we "shall⁵ be saved." There is no "if" here; no "may be" here; but a glorious "shall."

³ W.A. Criswell, *With a Bible in My Hand* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 38-39.

⁴ Paul quotes from the LXX. The surviving Hebrew text uses a word (*chuwsh*) that means "to act hastily."

⁵ Though technically there is no corresponding word for "shall" in the Greek text. It translates the future tense which is sure to be fulfilled based on the integrity and power of God.

But those who trust in anything else for salvation shall be disappointed and put to shame, especially when they stand before God on Judgment Day (cf. Isa. 50:7-8). If you are trusting in your good works to gain salvation, then you will be disappointed when you find out that good works are not enough to get you into heaven. If you are counting on your relationship to your parents or church to get you into heaven, then you will be terribly disappointed. If you are trusting in the Virgin Mary, or some earthly priest to get you into heaven, then you will be greatly disappointed. If you are trusting in any other religion or god to get you to heaven, you will be disappointed. Isa. 42:17 says, “They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in graven images...” (cf. Ps. 97:7; Jer. 17:13). The fact remains that all will stand before the judgment bar of God, and those who have not trusted in Christ will stand ashamed and condemned. On the other hand, those who have taken their stand with Christ shall not be ashamed.

Instead of trusting in anything or anyone else, I offer you salvation through Jesus Christ. If you put your trust in Him, you will not be disappointed. I am satisfied with Jesus, as well as millions of others. Salvation in Christ is guaranteed as long as you follow the steps of salvation that I have outlined today.

Conclusion: Don't you want to know for sure that you are saved, that you will go to heaven some day? First, answer this question, “Have you followed all the simple steps of salvation?” Have you truly believed in Jesus as your Savior from your heart? Have you called upon Him in prayer, trusting Him to save your soul based on His sacrifice on the cross? Have you publicly confessed Him as Savior and Lord in repentance of sin? If not, I invite you to do that right now. I want to lead you in a prayer. Silently in your heart repeat these words in your heart. [Lead them in the sinner's prayer].

Sources: William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957); Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure*, vol. 4, “God's Covenants” (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Bruce Corley & Curtis Vaughan, *Romans: A Study Guide Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); W.A. Criswell, *With a Bible in My Hand* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 67, 69-72 [25G.40]; Hershel Hobbs, *Romans: A Verse by Verse Study* (Waco: Word Books, 1977); Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:80] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2021); A.T. Robertson, *New Testament Word Pictures*, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, accessed through Online Bible); Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 317-325; Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's New Testament Insights on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010); Kenneth S. Wuest's *Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 1, Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).