

Romans 10

Introduction:

Almost every Christian faces this question at some point in their lives: What are we to make of the kind, benevolent person, virtuous in every way, who has no faith in Jesus? Often it is put to us very pointedly: “My grandmother is a wonderful woman. She is kind to strangers, generous to charity, loved and admired by all who know her.. But my mother is Jewish – or Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Secular Humanist – you fill in the blank. Are you telling me that she is on her way to hell just because she doesn't believe in Jesus? What kind of cruel, capricious god do you serve, anyway?”

The difficulties we have with this scenario are obvious. How do we deal with this dilemma?

This was a question that plagued Paul just as it plagues us. In Romans 10 Paul confronts this question head on, as it especially applies to Israel. There are two distinct points that he makes.

- I. We need to understand the process of salvation. 10:1-13
- II. We need to communicate the message of salvation. 10:14-21

People need to put their faith in Jesus. Be ready to share the Good News.

- I. We need to understand the process of salvation. 10:1-13
 - A. 10:1 Paul prayed his people Israel. It was his heart's desire to see them saved.
 - This is the place to start. We should all be praying for the lost.
 - B. 10:2a *I bear them witness* Paul had the capacity to take their side. This is huge in our ability to effectively proclaim Christ. People need to know that we are on their side.
 - C. 10:2b-5 There is a huge difference between self-righteousness and the righteousness of God received by faith.
 - i. It's not what we do for God:
 - a) moralism based on good behavior, good works
 - b) ritualism fulfilling religious requirements
 - ii. But what Christ has done for us. He is the end of the law to everyone who believes.
 - a) Christ takes His own righteousness and credits it to our account. He's paid every debt that we ever owed to God.
 - D. 10:6-10 The Simplicity of the Gospel.
 - i. 10:6 You don't have to rise to a higher level:
 - a) The “I'm not good enough.” trap.

- ii. 10:7 You don't have to dig down to some deep, deep level of knowledge:
 - a) The “I'm not smart enough” trap.
- iii. 10:8 It's not anything we work for in any way at all. Christ came down to us from heaven of His own free will. He rose from the dead in His own power. Now that Good News is readily available to you, in your mouth and in your heart.
- iv. 10:9-10 What it takes to to be saved.

- a) Confession with the mouth: The Lord Jesus
 - This term *Lord* was used in the OT Scriptures as the name of God.
 - This was also used in the formula “Caesar is Lord”. Some of the Roman Emperors enforced a form of emperor worship. When they did, this often proved fatal for Christians. Take, for example, Polycarp, (AD 70 – 155), a student of the Apostle John and later bishop of Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey)

Polycarp's greatest contribution to Christianity may be his martyred death. His martyrdom stands as one of the most well documented events of antiquity. The emperors of Rome had unleashed bitter attacks against the Christians during this period, ... Polycarp was arrested on the charge of being a Christian ... Amidst an angry mob, the Roman proconsul took pity on such a gentle old man and urged Polycarp to proclaim, "Caesar is Lord". If only Polycarp would make this declaration and offer a small pinch of incense to Caesar's statue he would escape torture and death. To this Polycarp responded, "Eighty-six years I have served Christ, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Steadfast in his stand for Christ, Polycarp refused to compromise his beliefs, and thus, was burned alive at the stake. (See also: <http://www.polycarp.net/>)

Philippians 2:9-11 (NKJV) 9Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Let's take a moment to confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord.**

- b) Belief in the heart: The resurrection of Jesus Christ that gives meaning to His death. Thousands of people died on crosses in ancient times. Only one died for our sins – and He rose from the dead. He's alive. In our hearts, we need to trust in Him.

E. 10:11-13 The certainty of the Gospel. The OT law required two or more witnesses to establish a matter as true. Paul quotes two OT prophets, Isaiah and Joel, so that we can be sure that what he says is true.

- i. Many people believe things very sincerely. It's not how sincere your faith is but whether or not what you believe is true that counts. I may sincerely believe that I can fly and jump off this building. My sincerity will not keep me from hitting the ground.
- ii. Believing the Gospel will not disappoint you on Judgment Day.

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II. We need to communicate the message of salvation. 10:14-21

A. 10:14-15 The Gospel needs to be preached.

i. As the earlier verses indicate, people are not going to know or understand the Gospel by mere human intuition. Someone has to proclaim it. We might even have to explain it.

B. 10:16 Not everyone is going to believe it. Hearing and understanding are not enough. It also needs to be believed, but that's something each person has to do for themselves.

C. 10:17 Nonetheless, people need to hear the word and believe it in order to be saved.

I prayed for Faith, and thought that some day Faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But Faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible, and prayed for Faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and Faith has been growing ever since.
--D. L. Moody

D. 10:18-21 This is a Scriptural explanation to show that there is reason to expect, what might run counter to our expectations: The present unbelief of Israel nationally and the growing belief of Gentiles internationally.

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Applications:

- Pray for the Lost to be saved
- Understand how the lost become saved.
- Share the Gospel with the lost that they might be saved.

Finally:

- Compare getting into a movie without the right ticket. It matters little what a fine person I am or how many tickets I may have previously bought to other events. I need a ticket for this movie.
- In the problem we looked at in our introduction, the problem lies in a misunderstanding of *whose righteousness saves me*. My own righteousness – or Christ's?
- People often think that our assurance of salvation means that we think we are better than others. Nothing could be further from the truth. My assurance is not based on my own virtue.
- Faith in Christ allows me to believe that my enemies may actually be more virtuous than I am. This allows for a freedom and humility that other forms of spirituality have little room for.
- We don't merit Christ's righteousness *because of* our best efforts, we need Jesus *despite* our best efforts.