

SAVED

Salvation has always been granted through faith.

ROMANS 10:5-15

People try all kinds of things to be right with God. In some cultures, sacrifices are offered to appease the gods. People bathe in sacred rivers and meditate on sacred mountains. Others bow down before statues and burn incense. Paul answered this age-old question. Salvation is available only to those who call upon Jesus. Our salvation is rooted in the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus and available only through His completed work on the cross.

What are some ways people try to gain God's favor? Why do people try to gain His favor?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

ROMANS 9:1–10:21

The first eight chapters of Romans represent the theological framework of our salvation. Paul emphasized human depravity and our inability to save ourselves (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). He then focused on the solution to that problem—the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. God demonstrated His immense love by sending His Son as a sacrifice (5:8), and that sacrifice transforms life as we know it.

This new way of life is not something we achieve on our own. Instead, we depend on the power of the Spirit. The Spirit plays a vital role in the lives of believers. He guarantees our relationship with God (8:1-11) and reminds us that nothing can separate us from His love (8:31-39).

This progression provided the theological framework for Paul to address practical issues, starting in chapter 12. But first, he included an extended section on the role of the Jews under the new covenant (chaps. 9–11). Jesus’ death had ushered in a new era, but God was not done with Israel. His chosen people still had a role to play in His kingdom—alongside His children who came to Him under the new covenant.

The new way of doing things wasn’t really new, though. Faith, Paul said, had always been God’s way for a relationship with Him. The symbolism behind the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

In a sense, while things had changed, they really had stayed the same. What the Old Testament saints observed in expectation, New Testament believers saw fulfilled in Christ. Even though many Jewish hearts were hardened, Paul emphasized the power of grace and faith to provide redemption to all who believe.

Read Romans 10:5-15 in your Bible, circling the action verbs. How do these action verbs help you understand what is required for salvation?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

CONFESS AND BELIEVE (ROM. 10:5-10)

⁵ since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: The one who does these things will live by them. ⁶ But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks like this: Do not say in your heart, “Who will go up to heaven?” that is, to bring Christ down ⁷ or, “Who will go down into the abyss?” that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. ⁸ On the contrary, what does it say? The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the message of faith that we proclaim: ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

VERSE 5

Moses spoke of *righteousness that is from the law*. However, that righteousness was reserved for *the one who does these things*, meaning the one who obeys the law. Quoting Leviticus 18:5, Paul pointed out that obedience to God’s rules and regulations is required for righteousness. Anything less than complete obedience falls short. In other words, perfect righteousness through the law takes perfect obedience. Of course, no one has attained perfection except Jesus. Paul wrote earlier that none of us are righteous (3:10). The law might point us in the right direction, but it cannot provide salvation.

How might the idea of gaining righteousness from the law be expressed today? What is the appeal of earning salvation when we can have it for free?

VERSES 6-7

In contrast to the impossible standard of the law, faith has nothing to do with works. When *faith speaks*, it doesn’t talk about perfection. It talks about grace. God gave Israel the law, but He also



made a way for them to experience forgiveness when they failed. He did not put *righteousness* out of their reach.

Paul took a passage related to the law (Deut. 30:12-14, with additional language from Ps. 107:26) and applied it to the work of Christ. Just as God did not expect the Israelites to move heaven and earth to discover His expectations, He also does not expect New Testament believers to work their way to heaven so they can bring Christ down. Instead, Jesus came down to us and lived in human flesh (John 1:14). Likewise, believers don't have to worry about descending *into the abyss* to *bring Christ up from the dead*. Jesus did not need our help coming back from the dead because He was raised through the power of God.

VERSES 8-10

Giving faith a voice, Paul wrote that it proclaims a gospel of hope. Even more important, *the message is near* for all who are willing to listen. They can testify to it through the words of their mouths and rest in the peace that fills their hearts. That is the message of faith Paul had proclaimed since his conversion.

Sometimes we're tempted to think of salvation as some kind of prize at the end of a rainbow or a reward for completing a spiritual obstacle course. Nothing could be further from the truth. Salvation is right in front of us. We just need to see it and accept it from God's hand.

In verses 9-10, Paul dug deeper into the message of faith and its role in righteousness. In verse 9, he defined the message of faith (that is, the gospel). Then he explained its importance in verse 10. The primary point is that salvation is not the result of our own efforts. As Paul boiled down the message of the gospel, he noted that we need to take two key steps. The first step is to *confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord."* The Greek word translated *Lord* (*kurios*) is the same word used for the personal name of God (*Yahweh*) more than 6,000 times in the Greek version of the Old Testament. Confessing Jesus as Lord is the same as acknowledging that He is God.

This would have been difficult for a devout Jew to swallow. In fact, the Jewish leaders crucified Jesus because He claimed equality with God. This would have been a huge sticking point and a primary reason Jews were rejecting Jesus. But salvation is not possible without confessing "Jesus is Lord."

While confession is an external sign of one's agreement that Jesus is God, it goes beyond simple lip service. Paul said faith also demands you *believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead*. The resurrection was a foundational element in the apostles' teaching. It remains the key proof of Jesus' identity as Messiah and distinguishes Him from other would-be saviors.

Ultimately, this two-fold demonstration of faith through confession and belief represent two sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other. In verse 10, Paul returned to the importance of the *heart* and the *mouth*. While he flipped the order of confession and belief, the message remains the same. The one who *believes* with the heart will inherit the *righteousness* of Christ—based on His work, not their own. And the one who *confesses with the mouth* this foundational belief will experience salvation.

Salvation is not a mere intellectual exercise of knowing stuff about Jesus. It goes beyond a set of facts about His death and resurrection. Belief and confession are expressions of personal trust in Christ. To believe in Him is to trust Him as the only way to God.

BIBLE SKILL: *Use a Bible dictionary to help understand a Bible passage.*

Look up "confession of faith" in a Bible dictionary. Review some of the passages identified in the article. Note how a confession of faith is portrayed in the Old and New Testaments. What insights did you gain from the comparison? Which passage identified in the article gives you the greatest insight into Paul's use of "confess" in Romans 10? Explain.



WHOEVER (ROM. 10:11-13)

¹¹ For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, ¹² since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. ¹³ For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

VERSES 11-12

Paul did not base his teaching on his own opinions or thoughts. He relied on what Scripture says. For him, God's Word was the ultimate authority for truth. In this case, *the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame.* Centuries earlier, the prophet Isaiah had given that message of hope to a nation of Jews who were prone to wander (Isa. 28:16). Here, Paul applied it to a new group of faithful believers—with no regard to ethnicity or heritage.

Believers—whether Jew or Gentile—never have to wonder about God's faithfulness.

The term *shame* could also mean “disappointed.” The idea is that believers—whether Jew or Gentile—never have to wonder about God's faithfulness. He will always keep His promises and never let His people down.

Paul's use of prophetic texts is significant. The Jews honored the words of the prophets as God's own words. So, by using them as evidence for this new paradigm of faith, Paul was proving that Israel had misinterpreted and misapplied God's plan for salvation. *Everyone* included Gentiles and always had.

Paul said there was *no distinction between Jew and Greek*, though most Jews would have disagreed. The apostle made it clear that God created every person, so He is *the same Lord of all*. He doesn't have one plan for Jews and another for Gentiles. Faith in Christ is the only path to Him—for any people group.

God *richly blesses* those who accept His offer of salvation. These blessings include benefits in this life (though not always the way we might think) and in the life to come.

VERSE 13

To drive his point home, Paul again turned to the prophets. Quoting Joel 2:32, he emphasized that everyone is welcome at the cross. No one must stand on the outside looking in. Through this, Paul provided a clear and authoritative statement of our universal need for salvation and God's gracious offer to provide it.

God worked out His plan by bringing the Messiah through a chosen nation. But He extends the benefits of that plan to *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord*. Ironically, Paul's teaching that the Gentiles were entitled to what the Jews had long considered only theirs revealed a deeper truth. The Jews who rejected Jesus needed the salvation that so many Gentiles had found in Christ.

What makes salvation through faith in Jesus being offered to all so wonderful and so difficult at the same time?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Salvation*

There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (John 14:6).

TELL ALL (ROM. 10:14-15)

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

VERSE 14

Questions are effective teaching tools, and Paul used a series of rhetorical questions to explain God's plan for sharing the gospel message with all people. These questions created a logical flow for



readers to follow. Anyone can *call on* God for salvation but not unless they believe in Him.

Paul had already established these basics of salvation, but he took them a step further. People can't *believe* in Jesus without *hearing about him*. They need someone to share the message with them in a way that they can understand. They need to grasp the truth so they can respond to the truth. For that, they need *a preacher*—someone willing to speak to others on behalf of God. The responsibility of reaching all the world is given to all believers, not just a handful of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries.

Gospel witnesses are sent into the world. They don't wait for people to come find them in sanctuaries on Sunday.

VERSE 15

Paul's final question emphasizes our commission from God to reach the world. Gospel witnesses are *sent* into the world. They don't wait for people to come find them in sanctuaries on Sunday or by the water cooler on Monday. Proclaimers are to actively move out into the world to share the message of the gospel.

Paul quoted Isaiah 52:7 to emphasize God's favor on those who share His truth. Their *feet* are *beautiful*—both to the Father and to those who need to hear the message. For Isaiah, that meant reminding Israel that their upcoming captivity would not last forever. For Paul (and us), it means sharing that God will eagerly respond to anyone who calls on Him for salvation.

God has given us this privilege. From the moment we accept Christ as Savior, we become evangelists and missionaries. Whether we circle the globe or walk next door, we must spread the gospel every chance we get.

What makes the feet of a person who shares the gospel beautiful?

IN MY CONTEXT

- God promises to save all who place their faith in His resurrected Son.
- Salvation through faith in Jesus is available to all people.
- Believers must actively tell others the gospel and willingly send out missionaries throughout the entire world.

How would you describe your confession and belief about Jesus? How did that confession and belief change your life? How does it change your life today?

Who are the “Gentiles” in our culture these days—not just ethnically, but maybe socially or economically? How can you and your Bible study members intentionally reach out to those groups this week?

Believers can support missions through praying, giving, and going. How can you participate more actively in each of those areas? What obstacles do you need to overcome?

Prayer Needs

