

Session 3

May 9, 2021

THE MESSAGE

Romans 10:8-17

The most prominent theological belief in the world is that salvation—regardless of how it is defined—is something that must be earned by good works. But the truth that most distinguishes Christianity from all the rest, is that salvation is granted wholly and completely by grace through faith, and not as a result of works (Eph. 2:8-9). While that might complicate things on the side of God, it certainly simplifies things on our side! But in a world of people who are convinced that “nothing in life is free,” the challenge for believers is to get that message across to others. In our focal text, Paul gives us three reminders about the message of the gospel.

It’s a simple message (vv. 8-10). Verse 8 refers to the righteousness that comes by faith. Is that message of faith written so far beyond us so that we could not obtain it? (v. 6-7) Absolutely not! To Paul’s audience, the essentials of the gospel were much nearer than they thought, having been declared already in the Old Testament (Deut. 30:14; see also Gen 15:6; Hab. 2:4). Salvation is not found in the works of the hands, but in the heart and on the lips. *Belief* comes first. The Bible word connotes trust, and in this context refers to a deep confidence. While the overall atoning sacrifice of Christ is included, the resurrection is mentioned specifically (v. 9), as it represents both the proof of the atonement and the promise of ours. But equally important is the *confession* of that belief, which confirms it in the life of the believer and declares that belief to the lost. As Dr. Adrian Rogers used to say, “The faith that does not lead to public profession, will not lead to heaven.” For reflection: *Sometimes a new believer will ask to be baptized in private. As a pastor, why do you think I always refuse such a request? Am I wrong?*

It’s a saving message (vv. 11-13). Verse 11 is a quote from Isaiah 28:16. The idea of *put to shame* can also be translated as *disappointed*, or even *embarrassed*. But the idea is that everyone who believes in Him will find His salvation sufficient. In other words, no one who comes to Him will be left out or feel somehow slighted (see John 6:37; Heb. 7:25). Why? Because since His salvation is by faith rather than works, there is no distinction made between people. All have sinned; Christ died for all; all can be saved. For reflection: *What do you think calling on the “name” of the Lord means? Why didn’t Paul simply say, “believe in Jesus?”*

It’s a shared message (vv. 14-17). Paul now moves from the message itself to the logical steps needed to accept it. How can the lost call out to the Savior they haven’t believed in? And how can they believe if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone goes and tells them? (v. 14). And who will go and tell them unless messengers of the gospel are compelled to go? (v. 15). The *beautiful feet* section in verse 15 (from Isaiah 52) serves three purposes. First, it fits nicely into the argument Paul is advancing on both the necessity as well as the blessing of proclaiming the gospel. Second, it reminds the Jews that the gospel was no secret; it had already been proclaimed to them; and third, it points out the truth about the Jews indicated in verse 16: they heard the good news but rejected it. This is particularly poignant because Paul quotes the previous verse from Isaiah 52 (above), then follows it up with a verse from Isaiah 53. Hence, Isaiah made his argument for him! The final verse from the text is particularly applicable today. Years ago, I memorized this verse from the KJV: “So then faith

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” While we would all agree that faith comes from the Bible, the emphasis of *the word* used here is the spoken word (literally, *utterance*). We can employ all kinds of tools and gimmicks to help us share the gospel with others, but in the end, the message must be communicated verbally. Simply put, if you came to Christ, it’s because someone *told* you about Him. For reflection: *Through the years, there have been fewer and fewer preachers entering full-time ministry. Why do you think that is happening? Where do you think the problem lies?*