



FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Date: 5/7/23

Series: My Next Step

Text: Romans 10:5-17

BIG IDEA: Faith in Jesus is the key to our salvation.

ICEBREAKER: Share about a time when you received some really good news. What impact did it have on you?

CONTEXT: Romans 10 comes off the heels of the Apostle Paul addressing questions about the salvation of both Israel and Gentiles. At the end of Chapter 9, Paul again talks about the importance of faith in regards to anyone's salvation. This theme around faith is something that Paul will continue to unpack in today's passage.

PASSAGE: Have a volunteer read Romans 10:5-17.

DISCUSSION:

1. What does Paul mean when talks about how Moses wrote about righteousness based on the law?
2. What is righteousness based on faith?
3. Paul doesn't want believers to overthink righteousness (bringing Christ down or up), rather he reminds them what the word says. How does Paul summarize the gospel in verses 9-10?
4. How do these verses show us how someone is saved?
5. How do verses 11-13 show us the scope of salvation? Why is this significant?
6. What point is Paul trying to make in verses 14-17 about how people come to faith in Jesus?
7. What does verse 17 teach us about faith?

APPLICATION:

8. Who shared Christ with you?
9. Have you ever shared the gospel with someone? What was it like? If not, what's kept you?
10. In light of this passage, what step do you believe God is asking you to take?

K4 CONNECTION:

In the passage, Paul leans in on the importance of believers sharing the gospel with everyone because unless people hear the gospel, they cannot place their faith in Jesus. If you truly want to see more people restored to Christ, then you have the great opportunity to go and tell others about Jesus. Trust in the power of God's Spirit and God's Word to accomplish God's work as you step out in faith to share Christ with others!

CARE AND PRAY:

- If anyone can truly be saved, take some time to pray for anyone in your life who doesn't know Jesus that they would come to know, love, and follow Him.
- Share any prayer requests with one another.

COMMENTARY

[v.5] Paul wishes to show that his critique of mistaken self-confidence based on law keeping is not original to him. In fact, it comes from Moses. Drawing on Leviticus 18:5, Paul describes an approach to the law that understands it as the road to life (“shall live by them,” with “live” understood as attaining God’s promised blessing). The problem with this, as Paul has already noted, is that it is only the “doers of the law who will be justified” (Rom. 2:13)—and no mere man has ever kept the law perfectly, either in Moses’ time or since.

[v.6–7] But there is another approach to the law, one that points to the gospel message. Paul describes it first by quoting Moses to point to the “righteousness based on faith” rather than establishing personal righteousness through law keeping (which is and always has been an illusion).

Paul quotes (with slight variation) from Deuteronomy 30:11–14. In this passage Moses states that “this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off” (Deut. 30:11). People may go to great lengths imagining how to understand and comply with the law’s myriad demands—this is the point of “ascend into heaven” and “descend into the abyss.” This is overthinking what Moses says, which is not that big of a mystery—“not too hard for you, neither is it far off.”

The Israelites’ objection to Moses’ (God’s) commands that someone needed to “ascend into heaven” to obey them was tantamount to saying centuries before Christ’s incarnation, “We need to ‘bring Christ down.’” The objection that someone needed to plumb the depths of death’s “abyss” was tantamount to saying centuries before Christ’s burial and resurrection, “We need to ‘bring Christ up from the dead.’”

This is specious reasoning, according to both Moses and Paul: “Do not say in your heart” means to not think or talk like this. It is neither possible nor necessary for sinners under the law to justify themselves by the law. Only Christ can justify, and not by law but by His work and promise received by faith—as Paul will now point out.

[v.8] “But what does it say?” is Paul’s appeal to the reader to pay close attention to God’s Word. When Moses said to the Israelites, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,” he was proclaiming the gospel in advance. Salvation was by God’s promise, received through hearing (Deut. 4:10, 36; 5:1; 6:3–4; 9:1; 13:11; etc.). But Moses had to tell the people, “But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear” (Deut. 29:4). The wilderness generation to whom Moses preached had stonewalled Moses and God by not letting God’s Word tell them what they needed (but did not want) to hear and thereby be saved.

Paul seeks to avoid that situation among his hearers (or readers). He desires them to discern already in Moses the “word of faith that we proclaim.”

[v.9] Paul sees a correspondence, a foreshadowing, in Moses’ statement that God’s saving Word “is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (v. 8)...

What Moses foreshadowed by calling people to hear, the gospel announces as fulfilled. It calls people to a trust that compels them to “confess with [their] mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in [their] heart that God raised him from the dead.”

Jesus’ lordship and His resurrection (which implies and includes His crucifixion for our sins) are the pillars of saving Christian confession. “You will be saved” is not only eschatological (eternity in heaven). It speaks to a transformed current existence, just as Moses’ call to do what God commanded (Lev. 18:5; Deut. 4:1; 8:1), rightly received, had heart-changing potential.

[v.10] “The heart” is the core of the inner person, the full and real “I” convicted of sin by the law and Holy Spirit. This person hears the gospel message in some semblance of its fullness, “believes” that God raised Jesus who died for our sins, and as a result “is justified.”

Along with the heart touched and transformed, the mouth reflects an inner alteration (“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”; Matt. 12:34) as shown by what it confesses—“Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10:9). This is not just lip service but brings “life to your mortal bodies” (8:11) as believers “put to death the deeds of the body” (8:13) and “bear fruit for God” (7:4).

“Is saved,” as in 10:9, refers to life both presently and in the coming age.

[v.11] By “believes in him” Paul is referring not to some generic belief in God but personal trust in the resurrected Lord Jesus as per 10:9–10. “Everyone” is apt because Paul has in mind faith “in him who justifies the ungodly”; “ungodly” describes all persons (3:23). Believing in the sense Scripture calls for holds saving promise because “to the one who does not work but believes . . . his faith is counted as righteousness” (4:5). True faith works (Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11) but is itself not a meritorious act, but a means of appropriating God’s grace sparked by hearing God’s call to trust in the gospel.

“Put to shame” is a euphemism for being found guilty at the final judgment.

[v.13] Paul turns to yet another Scripture to make his point, this time Joel 2:32 (Joel 3:5 LXX). In Joel “the Lord” refers to Yahweh, or God the Father. But in the flow of Romans 10, “Lord” refers to Jesus. Paul ascribes the same status to Jesus as Joel ascribes to God.

[v.14-15] Paul has been defending the proposition that God’s Word has not failed but is, in fact, validated, not least by various Scripture passages. Most Jews may have rejected Jesus’ messiahship, and some may reject the equal status of both Jew and Gentile before God. But Paul has responded sufficiently to such objections.

Now he presses ahead to the question of what to do with this gospel message, since “everyone who believes” (v. 11) and “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord” (v. 13) can receive the blessing of salvation.

Paul reasons swiftly: to call on Him, they must believe. To believe, they must hear. To hear, someone must preach. To preach, someone must be sent. This is precisely in what Paul has been engaged in for some two decades at the time he composes Romans. He has been an agent of being sent and of

preaching. And this is an honorable, indeed a beautiful development, as Scripture affirms: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” Drawing here on Isaiah 52:7, a passage that speaks of Israel’s restoration after judgment, Paul reaches breathing space in an argument that began in Romans 9:1, defending his ministry of preaching the gospel to Gentiles in the light of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus. God’s Word has not failed (cf. 9:6). Quite the contrary: how beautiful the apostolic preaching to the Gentile world (and to Jews willing to listen), spearheaded by Paul, has turned out to be!

[v.16] The verdict of the Word of God Paul stresses here is that in spite of the beauty of the “feet of those who preach the good news” (Rom. 10:15), many are not obedient to the gospel.

[v.17] A major link between verse 17 and verse 16 is obscured in English. The end of verse 16 could be rendered, “Who has trusted in the hearing [akoē] of us?” Verse 17 uses the same word: “So faith comes from hearing [akoē].” Both verse 16 and verse 17 revolve around hearing, as both verses address the issue of gospel reception, and the gospel is by definition a message announced with the intention that it be heard.

Verse 17 is a powerful freestanding summary of how faith arises (through hearing a proclamation) and what makes such hearing so powerful (the thing proclaimed and heard is the “word of Christ,” which could stand for the gospel message).

Commentary taken from the ESV Expository Commentary Romans 10:5-17

WHERE’S THE GOSPEL

Moses does teach that commandment keeping matters (10:5). But the righteousness based on faith which the gospel reveals (1:17) counsels against the error of replacing Christ’s work with human striving or speculation (10:6–7). In verse 8, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30:14, seeing there a foreshadowing of the “word of faith” embodied in Christ. The heart of a gospel response is the acknowledgment of Jesus’ divinity, His status as Lord, along with personal trust in Him as resurrected from the dead. This fulfills Scripture (Rom. 10:11) and is binding on Jew and Greek alike, for there is only one Lord, and He deals with all persons and ethnicities consistently (v. 12), as Scripture makes clear (v. 13).

To be saved, they must call on Jesus as Lord (vv. 9, 13). But without believing, which requires hearing, which implies preaching, what hope do they have (v. 14)? And there are no preachers unless they are sent (v. 15). Yet even when all these conditions are met, as in Paul’s day when Jesus has come and the gospel message has gone forth to synagogues in many places, the Jews “have not all obeyed the gospel” (v. 16). In the end, it is not the Word of God that has failed (see again 9:6). The issue is rather that many Jews are not giving the Word of Christ a hearing, resulting in disbelief (10:17).

Commentary taken from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible Romans 10:5-13,14-17