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

Intro. From time to time we hear about some tragedy that has taken place. Perhaps we hear about an earthquake that has killed 10,000 people in China or Pakistan. Perhaps we hear about a famine in Africa which takes the lives of thousands each year. Various diseases claim millions of lives each year. We read about the thousands of alcohol & drug related deaths each year. We hear about the one million+ abortions that are performed each year in America. How tragic it is that thousands of children are the victims of sexual or emotional abuse.

And even though I do not minimize any of those tragedies in the least, I must say that the greatest and most fundamental tragedy of all is the sinful condition of mankind. We were created in the image of God and were endowed with many of the attributes of God. We were created in paradise. But from such a high and noble position, 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, & various forms of abuse. We see corruption in government & business. What a tragic fall!

As we have studied Paul’s letter to the Romans, we have seen that 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 men are lost and under the death sentence of a holy God.

So what is the answer to man’s tragic condition? Many seem to believe that government has the answer to 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 & 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 send His Son to die for us and to bear away the curse of sin from us. And as we see from v.12, the salvation that God offers does not just save us from the consequences of sin. There we see that “the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.” God’s salvation also bestows many blessings. He will give us love, joy, & peace. He will save us from the power of sin & transform our lives. Then we will begin to regain what we lost in the fall of man.

Let me share with you a few thoughts about this offer of salvation:

## I. IT IS OFFERED TO EVERYONE

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 can be translated, “Everyone who.” Everyone can be saved.

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. 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 the Americans and another Lord and Savior for those of Africa. Now if each people group had their own god, then there would indeed be different ways of salvation. But since there is only One Lord, there is only one way of salvation. There is not one way for the Jew and another way for the Gentile. Jesus is the way of salvation, and He will save anyone.

So we read in v.13 that whoever believes and whoever calls upon the Lord can be saved. Even so, Rev. 22:17 also says, "...Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." That "whoever" includes me and it includes you. 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 & 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 can be saved. Let no one think that you are excluded from the offer of salvation. You are included in the word "whoever."

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. It is a part of the great simplicity of the Gospel which sets before man the open way to God and lets him know how easily God can be reached and how accessible He is to all men.

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 v.8b 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 in Jesus, and the salvation He offers. All of us can believe, from the child to the aged adult. All can exercise faith. We do it every day.

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

1. The Realm of Belief - Notice that you must believe "in your heart." A head belief 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...." The only way you can become right with God is to believe in Jesus from 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. 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 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, & 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.

The one fact that Paul mentions in particular is 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. That may be the reason Paul mentioned that aspect of the redemptive work of Jesus. But faith in His resurrection is essential, for it proves that He did not die because of His sin, but He died for our sins.

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.

We can compare placing our faith in Jesus to make a trip on a jet. There are several things involved: you must have a ticket, you must get to the airport on time and you must believe the jet will take you where you want to go. But all of that will get you nowhere. There is something else you must do to actually make the trip. You must trust the jet & the crew enough to board it. You must 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.<sup>1</sup>

Have you placed your faith in Jesus? If so, you have taken the first step. 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). 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, who is our Savior and Lord, to give us this salvation that He offers. This order 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 and calling someone. Better yet, when you call on God, you never get a busy signal! One verse in the Old Testament that ties v.13 in 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 and prayer are almost synonymous. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, *Continuing Witness Training Apprentice Manual* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board, 1982), 80.

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. Jesus means, “The Lord saves.” Christ means “Anointed One” and refers to the One 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 of the fact that He is your only Savior and that He is 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 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. The word “confess” literally means to “say the same thing;” thus “agree with.” You must agree with what? That Jesus is Lord. He is Lord of all, as v.12 states. Thus, you agree that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over all humanity. That implies that you recognize His deity. In fact, no Jew who had not trusted Christ would do this, for the Greek word translated “Lord” is used in the LXX of God. 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, & obey Him. I believe that repentance of sin is included in accepting & confessing the Lordship of Jesus over your life.

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 & Jewish society. Then in the time of Nero and after, emperor worship was required of the subject people. Everyone had to confess that Caesar was Lord. Christians were persecuted and even put to death because they could only confess, “Jesus is Lord.” Confession that Jesus is Lord had 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.

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. This is not to say that the mere outward act of confession alone will save anyone. But as Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt. 12:34). If you have *truly* believed in your heart, then you *will* make a public confession of your faith in Christ. 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.

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 one time thing 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 & Lord. A child can do that!

Somebody sent word to a preacher friend of Dr. W.A. 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,” continued the pastor. “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 Him. 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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, & give you eternal life? Will you step out from your pew and confess Him as Lord & 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 shame.’” The word translated “ashamed” can be translated “disappointed.” Have you ever sent off for one of those TV offers, and when you got it, you were very disappointed? The promises made about the product turned out to be empty.

But this 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. If you follow the steps of salvation, God will certainly do His part & keep His promises. Furthermore, I like the certainty of vv.9 & 13 where it says that we “shall be saved.” There is no “if” here; no “may be” here; but a glorious “shall.”

But those who trust in anything else for salvation shall be disappointed and put to shame. 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...” The fact remains that all will stand before the judgment bar of God, and those who have not trusted in Christ will stand ashamed & condemned; while those who have taken their stand with Christ shall not be ashamed.

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<sup>2</sup> W.A. Criswell, *With a Bible in My Hand* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 38-39.

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 & 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: Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure*, vol. 3, "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); 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* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); 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; Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

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