

Romans
Human Responsibility (Part 4)
Romans 9:30-10:21
March 24, 2019
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Well, I invite you to take your Bibles with me again and turn to Romans 10. Paul writes to the believers in the churches in Rome and that reminds us that they understood, very personally and up close, what it was to face persecution. Of course, over the years, that would grow in the Roman Empire. But the Romans regularly, from the beginning, persecuted Christians and even put them to death. And they did so because of one simple confession. It was because of the confession that every Christian made - Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord.

We see examples of that with the earliest martyrs of the church. In fact, one of the earliest was a man named Polycarp. It was about 155 AD. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, and the leader of the church in Smyrna, one of the seven churches to which Christ addressed His letters in the Book of Revelation. Polycarp was arrested and he was brought before the Roman Consul. And the Consul demanded that Polycarp publicly confess with an oath this: Caesar is Lord. Caesar is *Kurios*. This was because Christians were known to regularly confess Jesus as Lord, as a testimony to who He is. And so, as a test of their allegiance, as a test of their devotion to the Roman Empire, they were asked to confess, "Caesar is Kurious". When he was asked to do so, demanded to do so, Polycarp refused, and the Consul responded to him with these words. He said, "I have wild beasts and, if you refuse, I will throw you to them." Polycarp's answer came quickly, "Send for them." The Consul said, "If you despise the wild beasts, I will send you to the fire. Swear and I will release you. Curse the Christos, curse the Christ!" And then came Polycarp's famous reply. He said, "Eight-six years I have served Christ and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me." And he ended with these words, "Bring what you will." And, of course, the Consul did just that and he gave his life for his Lord.

In the passage that we come to today, Paul reminds the Christians living in Rome that at the heart of true saving faith lies that simple, yet far reaching confession - "Jesus is Lord". Now we've looked at this section of Romans for a number of weeks. But just so you don't lose context and for those who may be our guests today, in Romans chapters 9 through 11, Paul is answering one

primary question and that is: why have so many of God's chosen people Israel rejected their Messiah and His Gospel? His first answer was the reality of divine election. We saw that in Chapter 9:6-29. We're now studying Paul's second answer which is the reality of human responsibility. This section begins in Chapter 9:30 and runs through 10:21. And essentially the message **of** this second answer Paul gives is this: when people hear the gospel but don't believe the gospel, including the Jewish people, they are personally responsible before God for not having embraced that gospel and the message of Christ.

Now, what are the primary factors that contribute to this responsibility for not believing the gospel? We've studied the first one already. It's at the end of Chapter 9. It is a failure to understand the purpose of God's law. A lot of people don't embrace the gospel because they have mistakenly believed that the law of God is a way for them to earn their way into God's favor. That's chapter 9:30-33. The Jews had done that. Many other religious people connected to the Bible and to the Christian faith in some way do this as well. They mistakenly think that they can keep God's law and earn favor with God. We're looking at **the** second primary factor in the responsibility for hearing the gospel but not believing it. It's in chapter 10:1-15 and it is an unwillingness, an unwillingness to accept salvation by faith alone, an unwillingness to come to God in the way that He Himself has prescribed. We began by looking at the first 4 verses of chapter 10 where we learned of an abysmal ignorance of faith. Often, it is a self-imposed ignorance of God's means of salvation. In verse three he says the Jews didn't know! Now don't misunderstand. That doesn't mean that there had been no disclosure of the fact that salvation was by faith alone. Obviously, that had heard Paul's gospel and rejected it. So, it wasn't that **they** didn't know it in some intellectual terms. Instead, they had no saving understanding of it. They didn't come to believe it and to grasp it. They were ignorant of it in the true and ultimate sense.

Now, today, in verses 5 through 8, as we continue to understand this unwillingness that so many people who hear the gospel have to accept salvation by faith alone, it's often because they are so committed to, what I'll call, the diametrical opposite of faith. Because they are so committed to another way, they simply refuse and are unwilling to accept God's way. This is the message of verses 5 through 8. Let's read them together. Romans 10. You follow along in verse 5. "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by

that righteousness. But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).' But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.'”

Now in verses 5 through 8, I read the entire passage we're going to look at today. But in verses 5 through 8, just as throughout this entire book, Paul contrasts two totally diametrically opposed approaches to trying to gain a right standing or status before God. You see, there are in the end, only two ways to seek to be right with God. And Paul talks about both of them in this paragraph. Notice verse 5. The first is the righteousness based on law. The second is in verse 6 - the righteousness based on faith. Those are the only two ways that exist to seek to be right with God. That's it. If you have any desire to be right with God, you will take one of those paths. And every person on the planet does as well. Now, both of these approaches are referred to in the Old Testament. And so, Paul quotes two passages from the Pentateuch, that is the first five books of the Old Testament, to illustrate, to explain, to show the contrast between them. So, let's look at **these** diametrical opposites.

The first way to be right with God, in verse five, is the righteousness based on law. Look at what he writes. “For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.” Literally, the expression, “the righteousness which is based on law”, in the Greek text reads this way: “the righteousness out of law.” That is, the righteousness which has its source in the law. In other words, this first kind of righteousness is a right standing before God based on my own obedience to God's law. This is works righteousness. This is righteousness based on my own efforts, my own doing, my own pursuit, my own merit - anything related to me. In fact, in verse three, he calls it “their own righteousness”. Now Paul is, here in verse five, quoting from Leviticus 18:5. Here's what that passage says. Leviticus 18:5: “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which [and here's the key part, by which] a man may live if he does them...” In other words, he's not talking just about like living

day-to-day. He's talking about really living, knowing God, eternal life. A man will live if he does them. This is, by the way, a basic principle of all law. If you want to have a right standing before the king, on the basis of law, and continue to live before him you have to keep all his laws.

Now, we obviously are not used to the concept of kings. But this works just every day. Let's say on the way home, and this is purely hypothetical, you happen to be speeding. And the police officer pulls you over. Now, imagine yourself saying to the **police** officer something like this, "Officer, I know I was speeding, but did you notice all the other things I was doing right? Did you notice that I was staying perfectly within my lane? Did you notice that all of my headlights work? Here, I'll show you. Everything's functioning. The horn works. My car is in perfect working order. And, by the way, did you notice that when I was speeding and I sort of passed that guy, I used my blinker? Isn't that enough?" What's going to happen at the end of that conversation? Yeah, it depends how badly it goes from there. But certainly, you're going to get a ticket. You see, it's not enough. You're not a law keeper if you keep most of the laws. You're still a law breaker if you've broken the law. I mean, now step back and imagine yourself trying to tell God at the judgment, "God, listen, you know I know I've sinned. I am a sinner. I admit that freely. But I've kept more of your laws than I broke. Sadly, there are a lot of people in our world and in North Texas who have that as their strategy. I've talked to some of them. "What's going to happen when you stand before God?" "Well, you know, I've done the best I could and I'm going to share that with Him." The truth is, that isn't true either. In fact, let me challenge you. Not only have you not kept all of God's law but, if you're honest with yourself and the Scripture, you haven't kept any of God's law. In fact, not one, single second of your life have you ever kept God's law. Nor have I. Why is that? What's the standard? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind and soul and strength". Have you ever, one second in your life, loved God like that? Or, "Love your neighbor as yourself". Have you ever truly, without any tinge of selfishness, loved another person? I would argue that not one of us in this room, not one person on this planet, has ever met God's standard. Not even for one, single moment.

You see, what Paul is really implying in verse 5 is that the Jewish people didn't take the law of God seriously enough. That was the problem. It wasn't enough to keep it pretty well. The law

demanded complete, perfect obedience. Deuteronomy 27:26 says, “Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.” Paul puts it this way in Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are of the works of the Law [that is, who rely on their keeping of the Law] are under a curse. Listen, if you’re here this morning and your plan is, when you stand before God, to say, “God, You know, I’m trying to be the best person I can. **I’ve** done the best I could. I mean, You know that.” If that’s your plan, Paul says, you’re already cursed. And then he adds this: “for it is written [here’s what the Scripture says], ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE [there are no exceptions] WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.’” Unless you keep every single command of God, and you do so perfectly every moment of your life, the verdict’s **already been** given. You are cursed. James 2:10-11 says, “For whoever keeps the whole law... [if you could somehow keep God’s law entirely, perfectly, if it were theoretically possible for you to keep *every* command God has given] and yet [James writes] stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not commit murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” Break one, you broke them all because it’s perfect love for God and perfect love for your neighbor. So, sin once and you haven’t done that. And, of course, Jesus takes it even further. You know it’s a good thing that you haven’t murdered anyone. But Jesus said, “Have you ever been angry with someone in your heart? It’s a good thing that you haven’t committed adultery, but have you ever lusted in your heart?” Achieving righteousness by our obedience in a way that somehow satisfies God standard is utterly impossible.

And Paul has already told us this in Romans. Go back to chapter 3. Chapter 3, after he explains **the** sinfulness of all humanity, he says in verse 19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law [that’s everyone. There are those who possess the written law of God and there are those, according to chapter 2, who have the substance of God’s Law written on their heart. Everyone one is under the Law of God. The Law speaks to those who are under the law, listen to this], so that every mouth may be closed...” You know, it makes me very sad to hear people think that when they stand before God, they’re going to present their arguments. Listen, if you don’t come to God His way, when you stand before God, you will have absolutely nothing to say. Your mouth will be closed. “...and all the world may become

accountable to God.” Verse 20: “because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.” Go over chapter 8. Paul comes back to this in chapter 8:7. He's talking about unbelievers here and he says, “For the mind set on the flesh is death”, in verse 6. In verse 7 he says, “[it is] is hostile toward God [the unbelieving mind is hostile toward God] for it does not subject itself to the law of God [and then listen to this] for it is not even able to do so.” And he uses a Greek word for power or capacity, ability - the unbeliever doesn't even have the power to obey God's law. “and those who are in the flesh cannot [again, don't have the capacity to] please God.” You see, trying to achieve a right standing before God on the basis of what we do, is utterly impossible, and it's to totally misunderstand the whole purpose of God's law. That's what we saw at the end of Chapter 9. So, the first kind of righteousness is my own righteousness, achieved by my own sincere, but feeble efforts to obey God. This kind of righteousness will never make me right with God and it will never make you right with God either.

But there's another kind of righteousness, another way to seek to be right with God. In verses 6 through 8, Paul calls it the righteousness based on faith. In verse six he introduces us to this other kind of righteousness. Notice, the righteousness based on faith. By the way, this doesn't mean, don't misunderstand, it doesn't mean part of my righteousness is my faith, as if, I'm accepted because I'm bright enough to have faith. No, that's back to works righteousness. That's making faith a work. Instead, what he means here, is the righteousness that is received by faith. It's God's righteousness as it's described earlier in this chapter. Specifically, it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is His 33 years of perfect obedience. The righteousness received by faith. Now in verses 6 through 8, as Paul explains this kind of righteousness, he quotes two Old Testament texts, both from Deuteronomy. And **he** doesn't really quote them in the true sense. He kind of paraphrases them and melds them together. The first is Deuteronomy 9:4, and the second is Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Now, let's see what Paul teaches us from these texts.

First of all, he tells us what the way of faith, **this** way of being right with God, does not teach. Verse 6: “But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows [don't talk like this it says]: 'Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), or ‘Who

will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).’ Now what’s going on here? Paul **is** personifying this second kind of righteousness as if it’s talking to us. **Here’s** a person trying to gain righteousness and he asks, “How can I get it?” And he says, “Do I need to do something great? Do I need to go into heaven? Do I need to descend into the abyss?” In Deuteronomy, it’s “across the sea”. The idea is the same. Into something that’s hard, impossible. Here, “into the abyss” probably implies the grave or death. Now, in the Old Testament, these expressions “ascend into heaven”, “descend into the abyss” had become proverbial for that which was humanly impossible. In other words, the message of faith is saying, “Listen, you don’t need to do something impossible to be right with God. You don’t need to do either of those things. Christ has already done both. You don’t need to ascend into heaven because, in the incarnation, Christ came down from heaven. You don’t need to descend into the grave because Jesus, in His death, has already descended into the grave and come out alive in the resurrection.” What he’s saying, here, is this: you don’t need to do the impossible, because Christ already has. And, besides, when you look at the two Deuteronomy texts that Paul quotes from here, they teach us, first of all, that this righteousness is not our own righteousness at all. Deuteronomy 9:4 says this: “Do not say in your heart...” You recognize that? That’s where Paul is borrowing this from. And the verse goes on to say this, ‘Do not say in your heart...’Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’”. It’s not your righteousness, just as it wasn’t theirs. In Deuteronomy 30:6, just before the text Paul quotes, Moses says God must act in grace to save us. It’s not our righteousness and God must, in a gracious way, reach out to redeem us. Deuteronomy 30:6 says this, “Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart...” In other words, God’s going to act to give you a new heart. And when He gives you a new heart, then you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul so that you may live. You see, grace had to come before loving God. God will regenerate you. He’ll give you a new heart. And out of that new heart, He will teach you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul so that you may live.

You see, salvation doesn’t come to us because we make some almost impossible effort to achieve it ourselves. In Greek mythology (some of you were exposed to some of that in school) in Greek mythology, Hercules was driven mad by Hera, the Queen of the gods. And in his madness, Hercules killed his son, his daughter, and his wife. After recovering his sanity, Hercules

obviously deeply regretted these terrible actions and his sins. **And** he traveled to Delphi in order to consult and to inquire of the oracle, who was there, how he could atone for his sins, how he could atone for his awful actions of murder of his family. And he was assigned by the oracle and then by one other person to whom the oracle directed him, that he would be responsible to accomplish twelve superhuman tasks, or the “Labors of Hercules” as they're called, in order to atone for his sins and to achieve, or to earn, immortality. And that's where the story of Hercules comes from. He is seeking, in these almost impossible, certainly impossible to regular normal human, tasks in order to atone for his sins and to earn immortality. That was clearly written by humans because that's where humans always go. “I need to do something heroic, herculean. I need to do the impossible in order to earn my way into God's favor”.

But Paul, here, says don't ask if you need to do something great or something superhuman to gain a right standing before God. Don't think that you need to go on some odyssey around the universe to achieve a right standing with God. You don't need to do something great. You don't need to do something herculean to be right with God. Christ has already done everything. He did the impossible. And it's not yours to do. The righteousness based on faith doesn't demand some impossible condition of us. Notice verse 8: “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’”. To gain a right standing before God, doesn't require some superhuman, herculean effort. Instead, it is easily and immediately accessible. In fact, it's accessible right where you sit, right this moment. Because it only involves your mouth and your heart. Look at verse 8: “...that is, the word of faith which we are preaching...” This “word of faith” is near you. It's accessible. You can understand it and **it's** not impossible. It's in your mouth and in your heart. This message that the right standing before God becomes ours through faith alone Paul says, notice at the end of verse 8, that is what “we are preaching”. So, there it is. There's the contrast between these two different means of acquiring righteousness: the righteousness based on law, living in perfect obedience to God, which is absolutely impossible, and the second is the righteousness based on faith which Paul was preaching.

But what was this message of faith that Paul was preaching? Well in verses 9 and 10 he explains. So far, as he's developed this idea of man's responsibility because he's simply unwilling to come to God His way (salvation through faith) we've seen the abysmal ignorance of

faith. That's a self-imposed ignorance. We've seen the diametrical opposite of faith, which is the righteousness based on law. But in verses 9 and 10, Paul explains the dual aspects of true, saving faith. Now, notice, verse 9 begins with the word "that" because Paul is about to explain how this righteousness, that comes from God as a gift, actually becomes ours. Listen, if you're here this morning, and you're not right with God, and you know good and well you're not right with God, Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, is about to tell you how that can change right now. Notice, by the way, Paul is clearly talking about how individuals become right with God. Verse nine: "you will be saved". Verse 10: "resulting in righteousness ... resulting in salvation. Now the way Paul uses these expressions interchangeably, makes it clear that they are essentially describing the same thing. To be saved is simply to be rescued. You know a lot of people when they hear Christians talk about salvation or being saved, their first question, rightly is, "From what?" The answer to that question is, "From God!" because, if you don't come **to** be right with Him, through the means He's provided, you will face God as your judge and you will face His holiness and justice, and the penalty for those sins. To be saved from what, is to be saved from God's wrath. Back in Romans 5:8-9, Paul says, "...having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." The other expression here is "having righteousness" (verse 10). That refers, and we've seen this throughout the Book of Romans, to God by an act of His grace declaring the guilty sinner to be righteous; declaring a person who has a terrible standing before Him to have a good standing, to stand right with Him before the law. Remember back in chapter 3:21-24, he describes this as a gift of God's grace whereby the righteousness of Jesus Christ is given as a gift to us, imputed to our account, and we're treated as if we had lived Jesus' 33 years of perfection. That's the righteousness he's talking about. So, how can I be rescued from God's wrath against my sins? How can God declare me to be right with Him when I'm such a sinner? It's through the message of faith in Jesus Christ alone. Verse 8: "...that is, the word of faith which we are preaching..."

Now, in verses 9 and 10, Paul tells us that that saving faith, that is, the kind of faith that truly saves us has two basic aspects. I want to consider the second aspect first as Paul, himself, does in verse 10 because that's the logical order. In fact, I think in verse 9, the reason he says you must confess and then you must believe is because he's playing off of the quotation from

Deuteronomy which says it's in your mouth and in your heart. So, he follows that order in verse 9. But in verse 10, he flips them because the logical order is you have to believe in your heart, first, and then having believed, you confess. So let's start with the first aspect of saving faith. The only way to receive a right standing before God is, number one, to believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. Notice what he writes in verse 9: "that [here's the message of faith Paul was preaching] if you [and let's skip the first aspect, go to the second] believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now, clearly, Paul is talking about faith - if you believe. In fact, this Greek word is used in the noun form, it's used in the verb form (in the New Testament) about the same number of times, about 240 times each. The word is the same root word, "believe in faith". But here in verse 9 notice Paul says, "you must believe *that*". In other words, true saving faith has content. The intelligent comprehension of truth is essential to faith. We can only believe what we know.

When theologians look at faith, they parse it into three components. This is the first of those components. They use the Latin word *notitia*. It simply means "knowledge". True faith has knowledge. You must believe "that". Now, notice, the fact that we must believe, verse 9: "if you...believe in your heart that [here it is] God raised Him from the dead..." That points to the centrality of the resurrection in the Christian message. Now, don't misunderstand Paul. He does not mean to say, here, that the resurrection is *all* the gospel message. In fact, you remember 1 Corinthians 15, where he says, "Here's the gospel I preach..." One, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. Two, that He was buried. Three, that He was raised again on the third day, according to the Scriptures. And four, that He was witnessed by many, and he goes on to give a list. That's the gospel.

So why does Paul single out the resurrection as the fact that must be believed in order to be saved? Well, he's already shown us, in this letter, the importance of the resurrection. You go back to chapter 1:4. He says, in the resurrection, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power. In other words, the resurrection proved Jesus' claims to deity. In 4:24-25 he says He was raised again for our justification. The resurrection secured our justification. In 6:4-5 he says that Jesus' resurrection is what ensures our new life in Christ. We are raised with Him to new life. The moment you believed, you were given new life. Where did that life come from? It came

from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In 8:11, Paul teaches us that the resurrection of Christ guarantees our own future, physical resurrection. Because He lives, we too shall live. And chapter 8:34, we're guaranteed that we will never be found guilty because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, the resurrection, then, is a crucial part of the message of Christ. Why is that? Because the resurrection proved Jesus' claims to deity. It validated everything He taught. Remember, in John 2, He Himself said at the beginning of his ministry, "By what authority do I do this? Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." The resurrection also proved that God had accepted Jesus' death in the place of the believing sinner. So, when Paul says we must believe in the resurrection, that is simply shorthand. It is shorthand for *all* of Jesus' claims - His claims to be the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. And not only for His claims, but for all that He accomplished in His saving work - His death as a substitute for sinner, His burial, His resurrection.

And, notice Paul adds, that you must believe these things, verse 9, "in your heart". We would say: with your entire inner being, with your mind, your emotions, your will. This is the second way theologians parse faith. Not only *notitia*, or knowledge, but there also must be a *census*, is the Latin word they use, or assent. You must not only know the facts, but you must assent that they are true. You must believe it in your heart. To gain a right standing before God, to be rescued from God's coming wrath against sin, you and I must believe the facts of the gospel message. And those facts are ultimately centered in the resurrection. We must assent to their truthfulness.

But what I've described so far, isn't saving faith. How do I know that? Because what I've already described, the demons exercise. They know the facts and they believe them to be true. And so, to make sure that we understand salvation involves more than believing certain facts, Paul adds a second aspect of true, saving faith. Not only must you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, that is, all His claims and all of His saving work, but, secondly, verse 9 says you must confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord. Notice how he puts it. "...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord [and don't miss this word] *and* believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." So, this is every bit as important. What is this? Well, the word confess literally means to "say the same thing". Here, it's to say about

Jesus the same thing that God says about Jesus. In this context, it is to declare openly or to acknowledge publicly that Jesus is Lord. This, by the way, was the earliest creed and simplest creed of the church - Jesus is Lord. If you had lived in the 1st century, before you could be baptized, as you were standing in the waters of baptism, you would have been forced first to say, "Jesus is Lord". Then they would have baptized you. What does it mean to confess Jesus is Lord? Don't misunderstand. This isn't just saying the words. The New Testament is clear that there are people who say the words and it's not genuine. Jesus, Himself, says in Luke 6:46, "Why do you call Me [notice that], 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" He says that's utterly ridiculous. Why would you call Me "Lord" and not do what I tell you to do?" So, it doesn't mean just saying "Jesus is my Lord". In Matthew 7, He goes further. **He** fast forwards us to the Day of Judgment. This is Christ, the One who will be on the judgment throne, giving us a glimpse of what will actually happen at the future judgment. He says, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord'...And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" Same idea. "You're calling me 'Lord' but you didn't do anything I said. I don't know you. In 1 Corinthians 12:3 Paul says, "...no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." Obviously, he didn't mean just repeating words. Of course, anybody can say that without the Holy Spirit. He meant no one can truly confess this from the heart, except by the work of the Holy Spirit. So, this confession, then, must be a true reflection of the heart based on what you have come to believe about the claims of Jesus Christ and His saving work.

Now what exactly is the content of this heartfelt confession? Notice again verse 9. It's Jesus is Lord. The Greek word for Lord is *kurios*. *Kurios*. Jesus is *Kurios*. So, what does it mean to confess that Jesus is *kurios*? You look at the rest of the New Testament and you learn that it means two things. To confess Jesus as *Kurios* means, number one, that you confess that Jesus is God; that He's God. In fact, this word *kurios* (this Greek word), is used more than 6000 times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. The Bible of the 1st century used more than 6000 times, *kurios* is, to stand in the place of the Hebrew personal name of God, Yahweh. So to confess that Jesus is *kurios* is to say that He shares the names, and the attributes, and the very nature of the one true God. It is to say Jesus is God.

But that's not all that confession is Lord means. It also means secondly, not only does to confess Jesus as *kurios* mean to say He is God, but secondly, it is to say that He is master. Turn with me to John 13 because, here, Jesus Himself defines what it means for His disciples to call Him *kurios*. John 13. You remember the context? It's the upper room. Jesus has just washed the disciples' feet and this interchange follows beginning in John 13:12: "So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher [*didáskalos*] and Lord [*kurios*, there's our word. You call me *didáskalos* and *kurios*]; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher [*kurios* and *didáskalos*], washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'" In other words, you want to serve one another in a menial way just like I've served you. And then He adds this in verse 16. And here He defines what it means to call Jesus *kurios*. He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave [the word is *dulos*. A *dulos*] is not greater than [his *kurios*] his master [his Lord], nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him." So not only to say "Jesus is Lord" does that mean that He's God, it means He is my Master, He is my rightful Master. To me, Jesus is the Master, and I am His slave. I belong to Him. He alone rightly deserves and receives my allegiance, my trust, my confidence, and my obedience.

This is the third part of how theologians parse faith. Not only *notitia* (knowledge - you have to know certain things, certain facts), not only *assensus* (that is, you assent to them as true), but this is *fiducie*. This is trust. This means you entrust yourself completely to Jesus Christ. By the way, this includes repentance from sin because it means completely renouncing and rejecting your old master. You can't embrace Jesus as your master unless you completely repudiate it renounce your old master - sin, and Satan, and yourself. That's why he says you must deny yourself. It includes also trusting in Christ alone for salvation and a willingness to submit to Him. By the way, Philippians 2 says that eventually every intelligent being in the universe will bow before an acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. I love what DA Carson writes about that. He says, "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But it does not follow that every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord out of happy submission. The text promises that Jesus has the last word, that He is utterly vindicated, that in the end no opposition against Him will stand. There will not be universal salvation but there will be universal confession as to who He

is.” And then he adds these sobering words, “That means that either we repent and confess Him by faith as Lord, now, or we will confess Him in shame and terror on the last day but confess Him we will.” I just need to tell you that whether you are in Christ and willfully submissive to Him (you call Him your God and your master) or whether you are holding out and you are a rebel against God and His way, and you are living life the way you want to live it - it doesn't matter. Someday, you will confess Jesus as Lord.

So, the two aspects of the faith that saves are: believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, that is, believe all of His claims and all of His saving work, and because you believe that about Him, you confess with your mouth Jesus as your Lord. But those are not two totally separate actions. Notice, in verse 9, confessing and believing produce salvation. But look at verse 10: “for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness...” So, here, believing results in a right standing before God. He goes on to say, “and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. So, confessing results in salvation. Now I show you all that to show you that **he** mixes it all up, in order to show that these two aspects of faith produce the same thing - spiritual rescue and a right standing before God. So, these are not two separate things. These are really two sides of the same coin. Let me put it to you this way: truly believing the facts about Jesus with your heart means that you will confess Him as your Lord. Let me say that again. Truly believing the facts about Jesus with your heart means that you will confess Him as your Lord.

Now let me show you what this looks like. A picture is worth 1000 words and there is a powerful picture in the New Testament. On the Sunday night of the resurrection, Jesus appeared to ten of his disciples in the locked upper room. Judas, of course, had already killed himself and Thomas wasn't there. So, they were just 10. That was on the night of the resurrection itself. Fast forward eight days later. On the following Sunday night, Jesus appeared to the disciples again. This time Thomas was there. There were eleven. And let me show you what happened. Look at John 20, John 20:26. “After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them [this time]. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas...” Thomas of course had not been there but not only had he not been there, he had doubted that Jesus had in fact appeared in resurrected form to

the other ten. And so, Jesus singles out Thomas and He says in verse 27, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but [notice this, but] believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him [watch this], ‘My Lord [my *kurios*] and my God!’” And, by the way, there we see that it involves two separate things. It involves the confession of Jesus as God. But he uses the word *kurios*, here, not to mean God but to mean master. My master and my God. “[And] Jesus said to him [verse 29], ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed?’ That’s belief! He saw Jesus and he realized that His claims were true. He realized that He was raised from the dead, that His saving work had been accomplished, and he embraced him as God and master. And Jesus says, “You have believed”. And then He adds this, and I love this. He says, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

You know who that is? That’s us. If you’re in this room and you have confessed Jesus is Lord, you didn’t see him like Thomas did, but you believed exactly the same way - “My Lord [my *kurios*] and my God”. There is an ultra-high-definition picture of what it means to confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. That is saving faith. Now if you’re here this morning and you are a believer in Jesus Christ, if you have done what verses 9 and 10 describe, if you have believed the facts of the gospel - that Jesus is both the Son of God and fully and completely man, that He was the long promised Messiah, that He lived a perfect life of obedience to God (33 years of absolute obedience to God’s law), and that His death was because of sin (His death had to do with the breach of God’s law not His own, there was none, but rather ours/yours so that you believe that He died as your substitute), that on the cross God took every sin that you have ever committed or ever will commit and He knew every one of them and He put them in Jesus’ account and for those dark hours on the cross He treated Jesus exactly as He would have treated you for all of eternity and then he died for those sins paying the full and complete penalty he was buried and that God raised him from the dead to new life to say that in fact He had accepted His sacrifice, and you have not only known those facts, but you have assented to the truthfulness of those facts, and you have confessed Him to be your God and your *kurios*, your master, you have said with Thomas, “My Lord and my God” - if that’s you, then I have wonderful news for you! Look at the end of verse 9, “...you will be saved”. You are saved now, but he’s looking forward. He’s looking at the eschatological

judgment, at the future judgment and he says you will stand at that judgment and you will be rescued from the wrath of God that your sins deserved, if this is how you have exercised faith in the Son of God.

Verse 10. He says your faith has already resulted in a right standing before God, righteousness, and your confession has resulted in your spiritual rescue. His resurrection has secured your justification, your new spiritual life, your physical resurrection in the future, and it is a guarantee that you will never be condemned. That's the gospel you believed and that's the promise of God. If you're here this morning and you have never believed like that - you have maybe connected to Christianity, you have maybe even made a profession at some point - but you have never believed in your heart the claims and saving work of Jesus and you have never confessed Him as your *kurios*, your God and your Master and you His servant and slave, if you've never done, that then I have good news for you as well because the promises in the next few verses make it clear that that can be true of you even this very morning. Look at verse 11. "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.'" In other words, will not be put to shame, not in this life. If you believe in Jesus like this, you will not be put to shame in this life and you'll not be put to shame when you stand on the Day of Judgment. "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all..." Listen, you wonder if God would save you like this, if He would accept you and receive you on the same basis as Paul describes here? He says he's the same God. He abounds in riches for all who call on Him, for whoever will call - the idea is who humbles himself, who acknowledges his sin, and who cries out from that sin for salvation, for redemption, who puts his confidence in the work of Christ, who confesses Jesus as Lord - "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord [notice this] will be saved." That's God's promise to you today, right now, even where you sit. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, as he's just taught us in verses 9 and 10, will be saved.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank You that for many of us here this morning, You have already brought us to this place. And it's simply is such a rich encouragement to us to know that having believed in our hearts the claims and the saving work of Jesus Christ, and having confessed Him willingly,

gladly, openly as our God and our master, to have the knowledge that we are saved right now, that we have righteousness before You right now, but that we will be saved on the Day of Judgment, that we will not be put to shame - we don't have to fear, we don't have to worry because we have Your promise. Father encourage and comfort, give us **a greater** sense of what You've done, and out of that confidence may we share eagerly with others. Father, I pray for those who were here this morning who have never believed like this. Father, I pray that You would work through the gospel I have preached this morning, to call them to Yourself. And that even where they sit, may they believe in their heart all of Jesus' claims, all of His saving work, and may they be willing to turn from their sin, from their old master of self, and sin, and Satan, to confess Jesus as God and their master. We pray that even today so that they will be saved. In Jesus' name. Amen!