

Romans
Human Responsibility (Part 5)
Romans 9:30-10:21
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One of my favorite authors is Sinclair Ferguson. In his new book entitled *Maturity*, Sinclair has a chapter on the issue of assurance. Now I can't tell you yet that I totally recommend the entire book because I haven't finished it, but if it's like the rest of his books, I'm sure I will end up recommending it because I really love his writing. But in this particular book, *Maturity*, he has a chapter on the issue of assurance, and in that chapter, he discusses the difference between being loved and feeling loved, or we could say between the reality of love and having assurance of that love.

He illustrates that by using just a common, ordinary example of human life, the love between a young man and a woman. He says, "Think of a young man who has truly come to love a young woman. He is himself completely committed to her; he is confident of his love for her; her friends may equally be confident of his love for her. So his love, understand this, is an objective reality; it simply is, it is true. However, even if she truly loves him and trusts him, she may still not be convinced in her own soul of his love for her. He may have told her dozens of times that he loves her or hundreds of times. Her friends may have assured her often of his love, and yet she may still not be secure in his love. This is not the objective reality; he loves her; there's no question of his love for her. Rather this is the subjective experience of his love.

Now there are many reasons that this might be true, but the bottom line is you can't force assurance. Hopefully she eventually comes to understand and embrace that and to live in the reality of it. She may come to understand his love in a moment in a sort of a moment of sudden illumination. She may slowly and gradually come to the fullness of that experience of his love. She may become convinced of it intellectually before she feels it emotionally. And there are steps, of course, that both he and she can take to gradually convince her in an everyday, living, breathing sort-of-way of his love.

Now why do I share that and why did Sinclair? It's because that's exactly how it is with our assurance of salvation. There are issues beyond the objective reality. I mean the first problem,

frankly, is that you can think you are loved objectively by God when you're not. This is false assurance. If you struggle or think that that might be an issue in your case, go back and listen to the messages that we walked through in the early verses of Romans, chapter 8, as Paul compares those who are in the flesh with those who are in the Spirit. Or read 1 John, a book given to us to help us understand whether or not we're truly in Christ.

But the other problem is even more common, I think, and that is you can be genuinely loved by God and yet not have fully come to enjoy the reality of that love subjectively. How does that happen? How can we come to a deeper, subjective appreciation of the reality of God's objective love? Well today, I think Paul helps us in the passage that we come to in Romans. He helps us grow in our subjective experience of the assurance of God's love. How does he do that? By helping us understand the objective reality of God's commitment to us and God's promises to all who have come to faith in Christ.

We're studying Paul's explanation, the larger section here of "The Reality of Human Responsibility." Paul has dealt with, in chapter 9, "The Reality of Divine Election" and we looked at that in detail; but beginning at the end of chapter 9, verse 30, and running through chapter 10, he deals with the issue of human responsibility. When people hear the gospel but don't believe the gospel, don't believe in Jesus, including the Jewish people which is really the focus of this section, those people are personally responsible.

Now what are the primary factors that contribute to the human responsibility for not believing the gospel? Well, we looked at the first one at the end of chapter 9, verses 30 to 33, it is a failure to understand the purpose of God's Law. A lot of times when people refuse to believe the gospel, it's because they have already come to a flawed understanding of what God's Law is about. They think the law is there for them to earn their way into God's favor. They think they can be good enough, and that failure to understand the purpose of God's Law leads to the human responsibility of failing to believe the gospel. By the way, that is a common reality in religious people, Jewish or otherwise.

There's a second primary factor, and this is the one we're looking at now. It is an unwillingness to accept salvation by faith alone. It sort of builds on the first one, but this is a different category, an unwillingness to accept salvation by faith alone. This is chapter 10, verses 1 through 15. People are responsible for rejecting the gospel because they simply will not come God's way; they will not come by means of faith in Jesus Christ.

Now why is that true? Well, in verses 1 through 4, it's often born out of an abysmal ignorance of faith. Paul says in verses 1 to 4, "They didn't know." He didn't mean that they hadn't heard the gospel; that's the very point he is making as they did hear the gospel. They didn't really know it, they weren't gripped by it, they didn't embrace it as true. It was a self-imposed ignorance. They didn't understand that was God's way.

Another problem we saw in verses 5 through 8, is not only are they ignorant of God's way, but they have embraced the diametrical opposite way. They have embraced the righteousness based on law. Look at verse 5, "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness." Paul is really implying here that the Jewish people didn't take the law of God seriously enough. It wasn't enough to keep it pretty well, more than not. The law demanded, and still does, complete, perfect obedience, so achieving righteousness by our obedience to God in a way that satisfies God's standard is utterly impossible. This righteousness based on law will never get you into God's presence. But unfortunately, many people embrace that way; that's the common human way for religious people.

But then Paul contrasts that in verses 6 through 8 with the righteousness based on faith. Look at verse 6, "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)." I made the point with you last week that, when you look at these verses in context, essentially back in Deuteronomy, essentially Moses was saying and Paul is saying here, the righteousness based on faith doesn't demand some impossible condition of us. You don't have to do something Herculean, and what it does demand is very, very accessible. Look at verse 8, "What does it say? (This message of faith?)

‘THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.” You see, to gain a right standing before God doesn't require some Herculean superhuman effort from you; it's easily accessible because it only involves your mouth and your heart.

How? How does it involve your mouth and your heart? Well, he explains in verses 9 through 10 when he explains the dual aspects of faith. Here's what faith is, here's what it looks like. Saving faith has two basic aspects. Number one, verse 9, “Believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead.” We unpacked that and all that that means; I'm not going to go back over that, but let me summarize it for you this way, “You must believe in your heart.” In other words, it's not enough to believe the facts. This is where your heart assents to the truth. You believe in your heart both the claims of Jesus Christ, all that He said about Himself and who He is, and the saving work of Jesus Christ, His perfect life, His substitutionary death and His resurrection.

The second aspect of faith is found also in verse 9; it is, “You must confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord.” What does that mean, “confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord?” Well we looked at it again in great detail last time. It means two things: It means that you confess that Jesus is God, He is God. And secondly, it means you confess that He is your Master, He is your Owner—you belong to Him. Now I noted for you that this confessing with your mouth, “Jesus as Lord,” includes repentance from sin because it means completely renouncing and rejecting your old master—sin and self and Satan. If you're going to own Jesus as master, then you can't hang on to you as master or sin as master. So it includes repentance.

It also includes trusting in Christ alone for salvation; He is your sole hope and submitting your will to Him, Jesus is Lord. So those are the dual aspects of faith. This was the message Paul preached and he rehearses it in a different way in verse 10, “For with the heart a person believes which results in righteousness (a right standing before God) and with the mouth he confesses Jesus as Lord and that results in salvation.” These are simply different sides of the same reality, believing in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing with your mouth Jesus as Lord.

Now that brings us, today, to the practical implications of faith, the practical implications of faith as the way that we're made right with God, and Paul rehearses these in verses 11 through 13. Let's read it together, Romans 10, you follow along beginning in verse 11:

For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

Now, having explained to us the only way to be right with God is the way of faith alone in the work of Christ alone, that's what we studied in the previous section, Paul now wants to show us the implications of that way of faith. Here he draws out the key implications of the way of faith. You'll notice that verse 11 begins with the word 'For.' This shows that he's still building on that same concept of this way of receiving righteousness based on the work of Jesus Christ received by faith.

So let's look at these implications then. Here are the key implications of the way of faith—that is being made right with God by faith alone in the work of Christ alone.

The first implication he draws out here is this, its foundation is scriptural. The foundation of this path of faith, as a way to be right with God, is completely and utterly biblical. You see, Paul's not done proving to us that this way of being right with God is what the Scriptures teach. He's already done this, remember back in chapter 4, in order to punctuate for us that this is how you're right with God, we're justified by faith alone, he goes back to the story of Abraham and he shows us in Abraham's life, this is the way, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Then he gives us the illustration of David. David, a terrible sinner, who in Psalm 32 says, "Blessed is the man to whom you do not credit sin," speaking of justification.

Then in chapter 10, we saw last week versus 6 through 8, he quotes Deuteronomy; and there, he shows us that Moses taught the righteousness based on faith. So the Old Testament is replete with this way of salvation, this path to be right with God; but to drive home his point, Paul here in our text quotes yet another Old Testament text to that end. Look at verse 11, notice how it

begins, “For the Scripture says, ‘WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’” Now, Paul has already quoted this verse, but he's given us a fuller version of it at the end of chapter 9. Go back to chapter 9, verse 33, “...just as it is written, ‘BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, (And here's our text.) AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’”

Now, there in chapter 9, verse 33, Paul's emphasis in quoting that passage is on Christ as the Cornerstone, that's really the focus. Christ is the Cornerstone that God Himself has laid, and yet He's been rejected by men. Here in verse 11, he quotes that same passage again but with a different point of emphasis. Instead of focusing on Christ as the Cornerstone, here he's focusing on faith, on believing; he wants to emphasize the critical nature of faith. This verse, by the way, verse 11, is from Isaiah 28, verse 16. Look at verse 11 again, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” Paul's argument is that this Old Testament statement from the prophet Isaiah is teaching this—that faith and faith alone is the sole means of being right with God. We looked at it when we were at the end of chapter 9, but essentially God has laid this Cornerstone, this massive stone against which everything is to be tried, and every individual here only has two choices. Either you can fight against that stone with antipathy, or you can react with apathy, and either way, you will be shattered by the stone. Either you will be shattered by your resistance in this life; or at the judgment, you'll be crushed by it. Or, the other option is to throw yourself completely on that stone as your only hope; and if you do that, then you will not be disappointed, that's what he's saying. You throw yourself on the stone in faith and total trust and dependence; and as a result, you will not be ashamed.

Now look at what verse 11 says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM.” Obviously, we're talking about Christ; we're talking about the Messiah, the Cornerstone, and it says, “BELIEVES IN HIM,” could also be translated “BELIEVES ON HIM.” This expression describes more than simply believing the facts about Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, it is entrusting yourself to someone; that's what it means. To believe on someone is to entrust yourself to them; this is the third element of faith, *fiducia* or trust that we talked about last week. You must throw your entire reliance on Him as the only source of your support and hope of heaven.

Notice, I love this in verse 11, all that Isaiah requires is to believe and nothing else. Now don't misunderstand, that's not faith as you define it; that's faith as God defines it as we just saw back in verses 9 and 10. But where there is faith like that, where you believe in your heart the claims of Jesus and His saving work and you confess Him as your Lord, as your God and your Master, where there's that kind of faith, notice what he says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES (like that) WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Now, I have to tell you that in some ways that is a disappointing translation, because when we use the English word 'disappoint,' it's kind of a weak word. I mean, you know, it'd be like if you go to lunch after the service and you're sitting there in your favorite Chinese restaurant (I just threw a craving at a lot of you; I'm not going to the Chinese restaurant because you'll all be there.) So, but you're sitting there in your favorite Chinese restaurant, and you look down through the list and you order your favorite thing on the menu—Pad Thai or whatever it is, and the waiter (Is that, I don't know if that's Chinese or not.) but the waiter comes and the waiter says. "I'm sorry, we don't have that today." What are you? You're disappointed. "Oh, I'm disappointed." That's not this word.

As we saw back in chapter 9, verse 33, this Greek word that's translated 'disappointed' means 'to be dishonored, to be disgraced,' or most often 'to be put to shame.' It's the shame and disappointment that would come to someone whose faith or hope is shown to be vain, to be empty. And notice Isaiah uses the future tense, and Paul reflects that in his quoting of it here, "WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." He's pointing to the future; specifically, he's referring to the future judgment. He's referring to the shame and disappointment you would experience if you arrived at the final judgment, and you discovered that you are still in your sins, that you still bear your sins rather than Jesus Christ, that you have not come to truly understand Him or to believe in Him rather, and you have now the weight of your sin. And you're standing there before God, knowing that you are guilty. He knows everyone. He opens, as Revelation 20 describes, He opens all the books and all the books are unfolded, the story of your life and every single sin you have ever committed is in the omniscience of God, imprinted in His divine memory, and you are exposed for the sinner you are, and you will then be put to shame as He

says, “Depart from me, I never knew you, into everlasting punishment.” That's what this word ‘disappointed’ means. It means permanently, eternally put to shame.

Let me just say, if you have not thrown yourself on the Cornerstone, on Jesus Christ, that is what awaits you; you will be put to shame in just that way. But if you have believed in Jesus Christ, this is God's promise to you. Look at verse 11 again, God promises that, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone, in the way that we just described in verses 9 and 10, you will not find yourself put to shame at the judgment. It's not going to happen; it can't happen—you will never be disappointed.

Now, Paul's main reason for quoting this Old Testament text is to prove that faith, faith alone, in the work of the Messiah alone, has a solid, scriptural foundation. Folks, you don't have to wonder if this is God's way because He has expressly declared it in His Word.

There's a second implication that Paul draws out here in chapter 10, and it's this, its application is personal. Look again at verse 11, “For the Scripture says, ‘WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’” Now Paul does something here that you unfortunately are not able to see in most of your English translations. In spite of his profound respect for Scripture, he believes it is the inerrant, inspired Word of God, that's clear from so many texts. But here, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God Himself, Paul intentionally changes the wording of Isaiah 28:16. As I said, it's not easy to see particularly in the NAS; if you have the ESV, in this case, most of the time the NAS is more literal; I think in this case the ESV wins. But here's what I want you to see, look at your Bibles and notice what Paul says in verse 11. It says, “WHOEVER (Note that word.) WHOEVER BELIEVES.” If I could take you back to Isaiah 28 and you could read Hebrew and I could throw it upon the screen, you would see that, in Isaiah 28, it doesn't say whoever believes, it says, “HE WHO BELIEVES.” And in fact, if you go back to verse 33 of chapter 9, that's how Paul translates it, he brings in just that literal. But the Greek text of chapter 10, verse 11 reads, “EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.” Paul changes the word on us. He uses the word ‘everyone.’ Why?

He intentionally changes the wording to stress that the application of faith is intensely personal and individual. “EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” This is really Paul's exposition and proof of what he said earlier in this chapter.

Go back to chapter 10, verse 4, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” And now, he brings in an Old Testament text, and he intentionally changes the wording under the inspiration of the Spirit to say, “This is what the Spirit meant when he said, ‘HE WHO BELIEVES,’ he meant everyone who believes, this way of faith, to be right with God.” Do you understand what this is saying? This is for you as an individual in an intensely personal way. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter your background, doesn't matter even what you've done.

As you sit here this morning, you may be elevated in our society; you may be one of the cultural elite, or you may be at the lowest end of the totem pole. Maybe God has blessed you and you have significant wealth, or maybe you're poor as a church mouse. Maybe you're religious and you grew up religious and you've been profoundly religious your whole life, or maybe the opposite is true; maybe you're not religious at all; maybe you happened to wander into this service by God's Providence this morning, and you've had nothing to do with religion. Maybe you have lived an outwardly moral life; you've tried to do the best you could and to be self-respecting and to treat people well and to be generous, and you've tried to do good things as much as you could. Or maybe you have lived a spectacularly immoral life. Maybe you have lived in a pattern of open sin for many years. Maybe you have stolen and lied. Maybe you've committed adultery. Maybe you have even murdered someone. Or, maybe your sins are secret—only God knows. They're in your heart. What Paul's saying is, “It doesn't matter; it doesn't matter.” Everyone (that includes you) who believes in Jesus and the ways that He's just defined it, everyone who “BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” If you will come to genuine faith in Jesus Christ, then when you get to the judgment, you're not going to find yourself put to shame.

Thirdly, its scope is universal; its scope is universal. Verse 12, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on

Him.” Notice Paul begins verse 12 with a simple statement, and then he provides us with two arguments in the rest of the verse. Let's start with the statement. Verse 12 begins, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.” There is no difference between those who are of a Jewish background and Greeks, and the word ‘Greeks’ is really used in the same way we’d use the word Gentiles. In the first century, you were in the Mediterranean world where Paul was ministering and writing, you were either Jewish or you were Greco-Roman, that was it. So we’re really saying Jews and Gentiles. And Paul says, “There’s no difference.”

Now, that's a remarkable statement because Jews and Greeks, in the first century world, were divided in every conceivable way. They were divided ethnically; they were divided culturally; they were divided religiously, but Paul says they're all saved exactly the same way.

Now, Paul has said this before, in fact he introduced this theme to us back in chapter 1, go back to chapter 1, as Paul, in his introduction, introduces the theme of his letter, he mentions this. Notice verse 16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel.” He says, the theme of this letter I'm writing you is, in fact, the gospel or as he calls it back in verse 1, the gospel of God, the good news that has its source in God. He says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.” In this good news is God's power to rescue you, and it's true for everyone who believes, and then he adds, “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” He says, “Listen, this gospel is for everybody; it's for Jew and Greek.” Why?

Well, first of all, because we all share the same problem. Go over to chapter 3, verse 22, as he unpacks the gospel here beginning in verse 21. In verse 22 he says:

... (this) righteousness (which comes from) God (is a gift received) through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all of those who believe; for there is no distinction; (Here is the same expression, there is no distinction, because) all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (and therefore all are) ...justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Hey look, he says we got the same problem. It doesn't matter where you go on this planet, doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or non-Jewish, doesn't matter Jew or Gentile, we all have

the same problem—we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and so we are saved in exactly the same way.

Go over to chapter 10, because here in chapter 10, his point in verse 12 is that there's no distinction between Jew and Gentile in regard to this righteousness which is based on faith. It is universal in its scope; it is for everyone! When it comes to our sin and the only way of salvation which is by faith alone, your ethnic background doesn't need to be Jewish. That would have been again a surprise in the first century because those were God's chosen people in the Old Testament. But Paul says it doesn't matter; it doesn't matter what your ethnic background is; and by the way, that's not all that doesn't matter. In Galatians, chapter 3, verse 28, Paul says “There is neither Jew nor Greek, (There's that distinction.) (nor) is (there) slave nor free man, (in the first century world) there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ.”

Now don't misunderstand Paul; this is not teaching as some feminists want to teach that there are no distinctions; that's not what he's saying. These distinctions still exist, but they don't matter when it comes to our spiritual equality before God. Such external differences as our race or our sex may identify us to people in this world, but they do not define us, and they do not divide us who are in Christ. We may be identified in this world by these labels, but we are all defined by the reality that we are in Christ.

Now go back to chapter 10 of Romans, because having made the statement in verse 12 at the beginning there about the universality of the way of faith, in the second half of the verse, he presents two arguments to support that. The first argument is there's only one Lord of all. Notice what he says in verse 12, “For (Here's the reason there's no distinction in this way of salvation)...for the same Lord is Lord of all.” This is probably not a reference to God the Father, but rather to Christ the Son. The reason I say that is the nearest antecedents are of the Son. You look back in verse 11, it's “Him” and “Him” goes back to verse 9, “Jesus as Lord.” So, we are talking about Jesus here. Jesus, he says, is the same Lord over all.

You see, our Lord, Jesus Christ, is not a regional deity. He doesn't live in one little spot on this planet. No, He is the global Creator; He is the Lord of all in the sense of Creator, He made it all

as John 1 says, “Without Him nothing was created that was created.” There is no spot on this planet; there is no human being on this planet over whom Jesus Christ does not reign as Sovereign Lord and Creator; that's his point. That means that wherever you are on this planet, whatever your ethnic background be it Jew or Gentile, He is Sovereign Lord! That's why there's only one way, the way of faith. It's not like you got all these deities around the globe saying, “Well if you want to right with me, here's my way.” No, there's just one Lord; there's just one God! And we are all sinners before Him, and that means there's only one way to Him, and it's the way He Himself has identified. There's only one way of salvation because there's only one Lord. All the people on this planet, let me say it this way, all the people on this planet are equally under the rule of Jesus Christ and can therefore equally hope in His mercy.

This is the message of Scripture in Joel the Prophet, Joel chapter 2, verse 28. Joel looks ahead into the future and he says this, God, Himself speaking, He says, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind.” It's not going to be restricted to some ethnic group; it's not going to be restricted to the Jewish people. They will be included, many of them, but others will not be excluded.

Go over to the book of Acts because this was the message of the early church, and it begins in a profound way here in Acts, chapter 10. You remember the background, the beginning of the story of Acts 10, Cornelius, a Gentile, has a vision to send for Peter. Peter, at the same time, is down in Joppa taking a nap before lunch, and he also has a vision. And in that vision, you remember, he sees this large sheet that comes down out of heaven and it's tied together; and when it gets to the earth, it opens and out scurries all of these clean and unclean animals and God says to Peter, “Peter, you know, it's lunchtime. Rise, kill and eat.” I love that verse—this is why I'm not vegan, I have to say, and I'm sorry, if that's your choice, that's fine; just don't make it God's way because it's not. Okay? He's given us all things to enjoy. But sorry, that wasn't. . . I just. . . That wasn't in my notes. . . pretty obviously! Alright, but notice here what happens. So Peter, as he's having this vision; there's a knock at the door; it's Cornelius's servants. He realizes this is all tied together; God's teaching him a lesson about something larger than food, and he goes with the servants of Cornelius, and he arrives there at his home, verse 34 of Acts 10:

Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now (And now is added, but that's the implication here. He’s got it because of this vision.) I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, (Listen, God doesn't care what your ethnicity is; He made you that way; it doesn't matter to Him.) but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”

That’s not the way of works; he's about to turn around and preach the gospel to them. He’s simply saying, God isn’t a God of partiality, and it doesn't matter to Him, you know, your ethnic background. And then he says in verse 36, what you need to hear is the gospel; it's “The word which (God) sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, (Notice this.) (He is Lord of all)—.” And then he goes on to preach the gospel to him. Why does he throw that little phrase in, “He is Lord of all?” It's the same thing Paul’s saying. This message of the gospel isn't just for the Jews; it’s for the Gentiles too. Cornelius, it's for you; it's for your household; it's for your family. Why? Because, Jesus Christ is Lord of all! He is the Sovereign Creator over you as much as He is over me—that's the point. You see, back in Romans 10, there is no difference in how Jews and Greeks are saved because there is one Lord over all of them.

By the way, this is the motive for world missions. There is a trend today to say, “Well, we need to stop our, you know, sending our missionaries worldwide because we’re just exporting Western culture.” Well it's true; we shouldn't export those things that are purely cultural. But there is only one Lord of all nations. There isn’t a single person or point on this planet over which Jesus isn't Lord, and that means there is only one gospel, only one saving way to Him, and it is through the gospel that you have believed, and we must take that gospel, as verses 14 and 15 will tell us next week, to those who need to hear it.

There's a second argument Paul gives for the universal scope of faith there in verse 12. Not only because Christ is Lord of all, but because of the greatness of His mercy. Verse 12, “for the same Lord is Lord of all, (And here's the second reason.) abounding in riches for all who call on Him.” ‘Abounding in riches,’ by the way, is one Greek word; it means ‘to be super wealthy, to have far more than enough.’ We’re not talking about people who live, you know, at some level

where they're above the poverty level and have more than they need. We're talking here about having extravagance amounts, not just wealthy, but overflowing with wealth.

Now notice Paul doesn't say what the riches are here, only that our Lord abounds in riches. But elsewhere we learn that what He abounds in are the riches of mercy and grace.

Turn over to Ephesians, chapter 1, I love this; Ephesians 1, verse 7, "In him (That is in the beloved, in Christ.) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, (And notice where this forgiveness comes from.) according to the riches (the wealth) of His grace." Everyone on this planet, who is willing to believe, can be made right with God through faith. He is abounding in wealth—abounding in wealth!

You see, it doesn't matter, think about this for moment, what Paul is saying in verse 12 is it doesn't matter how many sinners come to Christ, and it doesn't matter how much sin all of those sinners have committed, He always has more than enough grace. He's rich; He's wealthy; He's stinking wealthy in grace!

I've always loved an illustration I read years ago from Charles Spurgeon. He was talking about this very concept, that you know, people wonder, does God have enough grace to cover my sin? Have you ever wondered that? Is there enough grace for me, I mean, look at who I am, look at what I've done? He says, "Picture, for a moment, those warehouses in Egypt after the seven years of plenty when Joseph has instructed the people to collect all of the extra food, all of the extra grain that's been harvested through those seven years of outrageous plenty, collect them into these massive warehouses. He says, "Imagine a little mouse of Egypt standing at the very edge of one of those warehouses, looking at those huge mounds of grain saying, 'I wonder if it's going to be enough?'" Listen, whatever your sins are, however many they are, His mercy is more—His mercy is more!

Calvin put it this way, talking again about this very concept. He says, "The wealth of our Father is not diminished by His liberality." You know what he is saying? He's saying, "God is incredibly generous. He just keeps doling out grace to sinners who need it, and the grace He has

is never diminished, it's never touched." It's like He's not giving any away. All the sinners He's forgiven in this room, all the sinners He's forgiven around the world, hasn't touched the grace of God—He is rich in grace and mercy.

The fourth implication, back in our text in Romans, chapter 10, is that its promise is categorical, it's promise is categorical. By that I mean, that the promises that God makes to the one who believes in Jesus are absolute, they are without qualification; they're without exception.

The other day, I was riding in my car and I had on the news; it was at the top the hour, and so I turned on the news just to catch the headlines, and an ad came on, and this is not uncommon, but this particular one stood out to me because, you know, all the legalese that follows at the end of a commercial done in like, five times normal speed? This particular commercial, there was more legalese than there was commercial; I couldn't even tell you what the commercial was, but I was fascinated by the legalese. It's like, how many exceptions can you give? Folks, when God makes His promises to us in the gospel, there is no legalese, there's no fine print, there are no exceptions. Look at what he says in verse 13, "for 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'" This is from Joel 2, verse 32. It's in Joel, by the way, just as an aside, in Joel, this is used specifically of Yahweh, God's personal name occurs there; but here, Paul uses it of Christ, just another of the countless arguments in the New Testament for the deity of Jesus Christ.

But notice what he says in verse 13, it's intentionally comprehensive, "WHOEVER," every person without exception. And then Paul, at the end of verse 12, he had given this little phrase, "call (upon)," and he picks up that phrase "call (upon)," at the end of verse 12; and in verse 13, he takes us to an Old Testament quote with that same expression. He says, "WHOEVER WILL CALL (UPON) THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

Now, the question is, what does it mean to "call (upon) the name of the Lord?" This is key, right? I mean, this is how you know you're going to be saved. He says you "CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD." So what does it mean? Well, let me take you back to the first time it's mentioned in the Bible. Go back to Genesis, chapter 4; Genesis, chapter 4 and verse 25, it says:

Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, “God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him.” To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. (Now watch the end of verse 26.). Then (at this point in human history) men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

This is the first time that expression occurs, but then it becomes commonplace.

You go to Genesis, chapter 12, verse 8, and it says, Abraham “called upon the name of the LORD.” You go to chapter 26, verse 25, and it says, Isaac “called upon the name of the LORD.” You go to Exodus, chapter 34, verse 5, and it says, Moses “called upon the name of the LORD.” What does this mean? Well, to really unpack this, you have to understand that this expression “to call upon the name of the Lord,” is used in four ways, and I’m going to build to the last one because I think it’s the way it’s used in Romans, chapter 10, but let’s just understand this. To “CALL (UPON) THE NAME OF THE LORD” means four things.

Number one, it means to call on God in the sense of confessing Him to be the one true God and your God. That’s, I think, what it means in Genesis 4 when it says, “men began to call upon the name of the LORD.” They begin to say, “God, you are my God, you are the one true God, and you are my God.” It’s used this way in Psalm 145, verses 18 and 19, where we read that, “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.” What does that mean? Well listen, he defines it, “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him.” To “call upon the name of the Lord” means that you fear Him, that you confess Him to be God, and you own Him as your God. “He will also hear their cry and will save them,” the Psalmist goes on to say. So it means to call on God in the sense of confessing Him as the one true God and your God.

Secondly, this expression is used of calling on God in praise. Psalm 116, verses 12 and 13, it says, “What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?” So he’s talking about all of God’s goodness, all His benefits. “I shall lift up the cup of salvation,” he’s talking about praise, and then he puts it this way, “And call upon the name of the LORD.” So we call upon the Lord in praise; we celebrate His benefits to us.

Thirdly, it means to call upon God in prayer. This is when we're asking God for something. Psalm 86:7 says, "In the day of my trouble I (will) call upon You, For You will answer me." Maybe you came in today and you are in the middle of very real and extreme trouble. Part of what it means to call on God is that you cry out to Him in prayer, "In the day of my trouble I (will) call upon You, For You will answer me."

But then there's a fourth way this expression is used, and I think it's the way Paul intends it in our text. It means, fourthly, to call on God for forgiveness, to call on God for forgiveness. It's used that way in one of my favorite texts, Psalm 86:5, which says, "You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in (steadfast love) to all who call upon You." In one sense, it means, He's my God, I've confessed Him as my God. But in another sense, I'm calling upon Him to extend me that forgiveness. Same usage is in Isaiah 55:6, that wonderful chapter in the Old Testament, one of the clearest presentations of the gospel of grace in the Old Testament where the Prophet Isaiah says, "Come, buy wine and milk without money," and he goes on to offer salvation—you don't need anything to buy it; the price has already been paid by another. And here's how he puts it in Isaiah 55, verse 6, "Seek the LORD while he may be found; Call upon Him while He is near." Call upon Him for forgiveness; call upon Him for mercy; call upon Him for grace.

Now lest you think I'm preaching some form of a cheap grace, I want you to understand that this calling upon God for forgiveness has to be accompanied by repentance. Turn to Jonah, Jonah's little prophecy, and in the book of Jonah, chapter 3, look at Jonah 3. Jonah has preached his message, and they're responding to that message. Look at Jonah 3:8, this was the proclamation that was made in Nineveh. "Both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; (And here it is.) let men call on God (for forgiveness)." But notice, "earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands." To call upon God for forgiveness means you're willing to leave the sin you're asking forgiveness for. This is what it means to call on God for forgiveness.

By the way, if you want a beautiful picture of this, it's in Luke 18, verses 13 and 14, where Jesus tells the story of the two men who went up to the temple to pray; the Pharisee who stood and prayed to himself, and he didn't ask God for anything. All he did was rehearse how great he is, right? That's all he does; he just keeps rehearsing how great he is. And then there's this tax collector, it says, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but he beat on his chest and what did he say to God? "God, be merciful to me the sinner." And what does Jesus say? "That man went down to his house justified," right with God, right with God. Why? Because he called upon God in repentance and faith.

Calling on God for mercy and grace and forgiveness is how true faith always responds. Don't misunderstand me, there's a big popular deal about praying the sinner's prayer as if that's some sort of a magic mantra. Listen, the sinner's prayer may or may not be genuinely expressed, but genuine faith always expresses itself in a prayer, a prayer of faith and repentance. This is the New Testament pattern, this is what's preached.

Look at Acts, chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, verse 21. Peter says, "IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." So that this idea becomes how you define a Christian, how you define a believer. Look at Acts, chapter 9, verse 14, Ananias is worried about going to visit Paul who's just been converted because he says, I mean he has authority from the chief priests to bind, listen to how he describes Christians, "all who call on Your name." This is how you define believers; they call on God's name. Verse 21 says the same thing, "Is this not he who (was) in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name," meaning the name of Christ?

Look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 1; here in verse 2, Paul defines Christians this way again. He says, the "saints (are those) who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is how to define and recognize a Christian.

Go back to Romans 10 though, because I don't want you to miss the main point of verse 13. On the one hand, this is an assurance of the immediate salvation of the one who calls upon the Lord in repentance and faith. If you do that, immediately you are saved. Let me just remind you of

the tenses of salvation. There is the past tense, the moment you believe you are saved; so if that's happened to you in the past, you have been saved from the penalty of sin. Right now, if you're a Christian, you are being saved, present tense, from the power of sin. And the day is going to come, future tense, when you will be saved from the wrath of God and from the presence of sin. So this is really a promise about our future salvation. Notice he uses the future tense again in verse 13, "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." Saved from what? Well, look back at chapter 5, verse 9, "having been justified by His blood, we (will) be (future tense) saved from the wrath of God through Him."

You know what Paul is saying? Don't miss this, this is the sweet point of this, if you have believed in your heart the claims of Jesus Christ, if you have believed in your heart in His saving work, His perfect life, His substitutionary death, His resurrection, His ascension, and if you have confessed from your heart Jesus Christ as your God and your Master in repentance and faith, then this is a promise from God Himself to you. Because you have called on the name of the Lord in that way, you will be saved—that is His promise to you for your encouragement, your comfort, your hope. What do we tend to fear, believers? We tend to fear death, and we tend to fear appearing before God in judgment. Paul says, "You don't have to be afraid if you have believed in Him." You will be saved; you will not experience the judgment of God, the wrath of God.

But this verse is also more than a promise; it's an invitation. If you're here this morning and you've never called on the name of the Lord, if you, like the tax collector, will throw yourself on the mercy of God, you will be saved right now, immediately! And the Lord will begin His work in your life, and you will become increasingly holy as we saw in Psalm 99 this morning. And when you die, you stand before God, you will be saved from His wrath just as this passage promises; because if you are in Christ, if Christ is your legal representative, then everything He has done becomes yours and you stand in Him so you can no more be put to shame at the Judgment than Jesus Christ can, the One who represents you. "For WHOEVER WILL CALL (upon) THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED," that's God's promise!

Let's pray together. Father, thank you for these amazingly comforting verses. Lord, help us to understand and experience subjectively the reality of your objective love. Help us to embrace the promises of your Word, knowing that they are true, that you are not a liar; you are not a man that you should lie, nor the Son of Man that you should repent, have you said it and will you not make it good? Father we thank you! Give us hope. For those who are in Christ, Lord strengthen their faith, take away their fear, strengthen them in the assurance of your love even in the promises you've made in this passage this morning.

And Father, for those who have never called upon your name in Christ, may they, this morning, just like the tax collector, throw themselves on your mercy, and find that whatever they've done, whatever they've become, your mercy is more. We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.