

Believe

EVERYONE WHO CONFESSES AND BELIEVES IN
JESUS WILL BE SAVED.

Romans 9:30–10:3, 9-17

9:30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who **did not pursue righteousness**, **A** have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. **31** But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. **32** Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the **stumbling stone**. **B** **33** As it is written, Look, I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over and a rock to trip over, and the one who believes on him will **not be put to shame**. **C** **10:1** Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for **their salvation**. **D** **2** I can testify about them that they have **zeal** **E** for God, but not according to knowledge. **3** Since they are **ignorant** **F** of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. [. . .] **9** If you **confess with your mouth**, **G** "Jesus is Lord," and **believe in your heart** **H** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, **12** since there is **no distinction** **I** between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. **13** For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. **14** How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear **without a preacher?** **J** **15** And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. **16** But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? **17** So **faith comes from what is heard**, **K** and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Gentiles did not keep the law. They received God's favor by faith. In contrast, the Jews could never find righteousness in the law.
- B** Literally an obstacle that causes one to trip. For many Jews, Jesus was a stumbling block to earning God's favor through the law of Moses.
- C** Paul referred to Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 to show that God sent Jesus as Messiah to remove Israel's shame and turn the nation back to Him.
- D** Paul's deepest desire for Israelites was for them to accept Jesus and find new life in Him.
- E** The Greek wording suggests boiling heat or intensity. Sometimes it was used to describe jealousy. The Israelites were passionate about God, but their passion was misguided.
- F** Not an intellectual ignorance. Rather, the Jews lacked a proper understanding of God's plan for salvation. As a result, they blindly pursued their own path to Him through the law.
- G** The Greek word translated "confess" means to "speak the same" or "agree." It aligns the speaker with the reality that Jesus is Lord. This suggests a submission to God's plan for salvation over any human plan.
- H** Faith in the finished work of Jesus. Confession and faith work together to bring individuals into a personal relationship with God through Christ.
- I** Jews and Gentiles are equal before God and come to Him the same way. He redeems all who call on Him (see v. 13).
- J** Believers are responsible for sharing the gospel with those who have not heard.
- K** Saving faith becomes active when one hears and accepts the gospel. The content of the gospel is the "message about Christ."



Righteousness through Faith (Rom. 9:30-33)

- Paul explained that the Gentiles never tried to keep the law of Moses, yet they obtained the righteousness of God that comes through faith.
- Meanwhile, the Jews pursued a righteousness based on works. Yet, they had not achieved it no matter how well they kept the law.
- Paul cited two verses from Isaiah to explain that the Jews stumbled over God's plan of salvation through the Messiah.

Misguided Zeal (Rom. 10:1-3)

- Paul revealed that his heart's greatest desire and prayer was for the salvation of the Jews.
- He testified that the Jews had zeal for God—but this zeal was misguided. As a result, they rejected God's way of righteousness that comes only through faith in Christ. They had attempted to establish righteousness in their own way and failed.

Salvation Available to All (Rom. 10:9-13)

- Paul explained that the message of salvation rests on the convictions that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead.
- The apostle affirmed that any person who makes the choice to believe and confess Christ will be saved.

Go Tell (Rom. 10:14-17)

- Paul used a series of rhetorical questions to urge believers to share the gospel with all people. He noted that people cannot respond to the gospel unless they hear its message.

Summary Statements

Everyone who confesses and believes in Jesus will be saved.

- All people need to understand that true righteousness comes through faith not by works.
- Believers can follow Paul's example by praying for the salvation of lost people.
- Any person who has not yet believed and confessed Jesus can do so and be saved.
- Believers must tell others the gospel message and send missionaries throughout the entire world.

Memory Verse

Romans 10:9

Key Doctrine

Salvation

There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
(See John 14:6; Acts 4:12.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

ENGAGE

What's the connection between confessing to a crime and believing that you broke the law? (PSG, p. 73)

- When people hear about confessions, they think about the justice system. That makes sense. When a person confesses to a crime, it usually means the law has been broken and justice will be served.
- In the legal system, confession confirms guilt and results in punishment. But when it comes to the gospel, confession of Jesus acknowledges our need for Him and leads to freedom and salvation.

Bonus: What are some negative things people might confess? What are some positive truths people could confess?

EXPLORE

RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH (ROM. 9:30-33)

Bonus: When have you seen two ways to solve a single problem? When have you struggled to find one way to get a job done?

- Instead of pursuing the Mosaic law, Gentiles tended to wander in darkness until they came to Christ by faith.
- In contrast, the Jews worked hard to keep the law, but they were just as lost. They stumbled over Jesus and salvation by faith.

Why might people stumble over the message of the gospel? (PSG, p. 76)

MISGUIDED ZEAL (ROM. 10:1-3)

Bonus: How much weight do you give someone's good intentions? Why?

- Paul longed for the Jews to accept Jesus. As a former Jewish leader, he understood their zeal for God. But as a Christian, he understood their zeal was misplaced.
- They had passion, but they didn't have a solid understanding of God's plan for salvation. As result, they tried to make their own rules—and failed miserably.

How can religious zeal get in the way of knowing God? (PSG, p. 77)

SALVATION AVAILABLE TO ALL (ROM. 10:9-13)

Bonus: What's the best deal you've ever seen? Were there any limits or "strings" attached?

- Paul made clear God's way of salvation. It involves confessing Jesus is Lord. Confessing Jesus as Lord is the same as acknowledging that He is God. This would have

been difficult for the Jew and a primary reason they were rejecting Jesus. But salvation is not possible without confessing, "Jesus is Lord."

- Faith also demands that you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. Salvation involves both believing (heart) and outwardly confessing (mouth).
- God does not want anyone excluded from the opportunity to hear the good news of salvation and to call on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. He wants every person to hear it and accept it.

What does it mean to confess Jesus as Lord? (PSG, p. 78)

GO TELL (ROM. 10:14-17)

Who shared the gospel with you when you invited Christ into your life by faith? Who in your world needs you to share the good news of Christ with them? (PSG, p. 80)

- In light of the truth that the gospel is for all people, Paul raised four questions. Each question began with the same word: *How*. In a nutshell, the questions affirmed people's need to hear and believe the gospel and Christ followers' responsibility to share the message of Jesus.
- Paul's words challenge us to support missionaries and other vocational ministers. However, they also remind us that we have been sent to share the gospel in our neighborhoods and communities.

What hinders people from calling on Jesus for salvation? What role do believers play in removing these hindrances? (PSG, p. 80)

CHALLENGE

As a group, share some accounts of your most recent conversations about Jesus with lost people.

Have several members share their testimonies about how they gave their lives to Christ. (PSG, p. 81)

Reflect on how you came to put your faith in Jesus and receive His gift of salvation.

What kind of difference does He make in your life right now? (PSG, p. 81)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 80)

Use other Scripture to help understand another Bible passage.

Read Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-41. List all the main points that you see in his sermon and compare it to what you find in Paul's teaching from Romans 9-10. Peter's message and Paul's writings make up what has been called Christianity's "kerygma," or the preaching of the apostles. Consider how you can share these truths with those around you. Evaluate your effectiveness in sharing the gospel with those in your sphere of influence.

Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 80 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their work. Ask: ***What are the most important truths to convey when sharing the gospel?*** Discuss responses. Challenge adults to find ways to share these truths with someone else this week.

OBJECT LESSON: HUMAN HEART

Write "heart" on the board. Encourage adults to suggest different ways the word is used today. Record their responses on the board.

Display a model or picture of a human heart. Explain that the heart pumps blood throughout the body, which provides oxygen and needed nutrients, while also removing waste.

Direct a volunteer to read Romans 10:9-13. Note Paul's emphasis on the heart. Lead a brief discussion on how this spiritual use of heart is similar and different from discussions about our physical hearts. Ask: ***What does it mean to "believe in your heart"? How are our hearts changed when we confess Christ as Lord?***

Remind adults that faith is the key to becoming a member of God's family. As time allows, walk through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Let adults know that you are available to speak with anyone who wants to know more about giving their heart to Jesus.

DIG DEEPER

FAITH ALONE

"Salvation by faith alone" (*sola fide*) is the core truth that people are made right with God only by trusting in Jesus Christ—not by works, religious effort, or moral performance. This doctrine is not just a Reformation idea. It is anchored in Scripture. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Paul left no room for human works. Instead, he made sure his readers understood that salvation was the result of faith in what Jesus did on the cross.

As noted, salvation is not something we can earn through our own efforts, as noble as those efforts may be. It is a gift we receive on the basis of faith alone. We acknowledge who Jesus is (Messiah) and trust that His way to God is the only way to God.

In Romans 9:30-10:3, Paul explained how Gentiles, who were not striving for righteousness by the law, received it instead by faith. At the same time, Israel pursued righteousness through the law and failed. Their problem was not in pursuing righteousness itself, but in pursuing it apart from Christ.¹

Romans 10:13 reinforces this point: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Salvation is open to all, regardless of background. This would have run contrary to understanding of many Jews in the first century, but God consistently emphasized His universal offer of grace in His Word. Our redemption depends entirely on God's mercy. Faith in Jesus is the only path to righteousness because only He fulfilled the law perfectly.²

Faith is not just agreeing with facts. Paul tied belief with confession (Rom. 10:10). True faith involves personal trust and public allegiance to Jesus as Lord.

To be saved by faith alone means giving up any confidence in ourselves and leaning completely on Christ. Salvation is about submitting to the righteousness of God and receiving it through humble faith.³ This is the heart of the gospel.

Sources:

1. Schreiner, Thomas R., "Romans," *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Baker Academic, 1994), 556.
2. Moo, Douglas J., "The Epistle to the Romans," *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1996), 628.
3. Stott, John R.W., "The Message of Romans," *The Bible Speaks Today* (Intervarsity Press, 1994), 284.