



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 10:5-13

"Salvation and Confession"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are continuing the exposition of the Epistle to the Romans this morning. And we're turning to Romans chapter 10, verse 5 through verse 13. The apostle has been speaking about the sovereignty of God in chapter 9 of the epistle, seeking to explain how it is that Israel the elect nation is not among that elect people that he has described in Romans chapter 1 through 8, which has arisen out of the preaching of the grace of God. In chapter 10 he turns to the other emphasis of the gospel, and that is the human responsibility, and he's talking now about the reasons from the human standpoint for the rejection of the nation. And in the 5th verse, after having stated that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, he goes on to describe what is the word of Faith. In the 5th verse we read,

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above): Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (What is the word of faith? Well the apostle says,) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the

Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Now, the apostle would like to support this by texts from Scripture and so he says): For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] The subject for this morning as we continue that exposition of Paul's letter to the Romans is "Salvation and Confession." Romans, "that noblest sermon of grace," as it has been called, has been thought difficult and not suitable for Sunday morning preaching. This "bad reputation" of the letter is, however, refuted by two facts. In the first place, the apostle did not write for scholars. If one reads the 16th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he immediately discovers that the apostle wrote for the common people. The many names that are mentioned in that chapter are just the names of ordinary people such as you and I are. The apostle wrote for common people, he wrote for freed men, he wrote for slaves, he wrote for men, and he wrote for women. G. K. Chesterton once spoke about a man who spoke disparagingly about Paul's teaching as "theology that even women could understand!" [Laughter] Well, that is not really a disparagement of the apostle's teaching. It is evidence of the fact that he at least recognized that the Epistle to the Romans is something that all of us should understand. And I do believe that if we look at it in faith, look at it as it was intended to be looked at, we shall discover that Romans is not something difficult, but it is something that ministers to us, exactly where we are.

Paul, in other places, tells us that the Christians were not wise according to worldly standards. They were not the wise of this world. They were not the noble of this world for the most part, although some were. Some were noble and some were wise. But really the apostle's words are written for those who understand the grace of God. Many modern Christians today are readers of good solid literature. Many of them, if they go into our ordinary bookstores today, don't have much opportunity to read anything solid, because the great mass of evangelicals are satisfied with very shallow reading. But there are a number of Christians all over this land who are reading good literature. The church has a right to solid food. The Epistle to the Romans is not difficult. It should never have had a bad reputation. It should have a good reputation.

The real difficulty with Romans is not in its form. The real difficulty with Romans is in its content. Men expect that sermons should be sermons on morality, but the apostle preaches grace. And in the fact that he preaches grace is found its greatest difficulty. It's not so much that he speaks in difficult terms, but he talks about things that we do not understand, because we are adjusted to morality. There is a story about a doctor who was trying to give a Protestant minister an intravenous injection, but was having great difficulty in finding a suitable vein. In the end, he laid aside the hypodermic syringe with a sigh, saying that the work of a clergyman is not conducive to making veins stand out; whereupon the nurse in attendance softened the remark by saying good-humouredly, "Except for the vein of anger in his forehead." [Laughter] The vein of anger on the forehead of a minister is his righteous indignation against the lives of people, so we think. It's an indication, when the vein begins to be seen, that we are not to take what he says with a great deal of seriousness from that point on.

The apostle's sermons were difficult not because of the depth of their content, but simple because we are not tuned into the grace of God. We don't understand grace today. We understand morality, but not grace. But morality is not what the apostle proclaimed, except insofar as it was the product of the grace of God. It is by grace that believers are saved, not by morality. It is by grace that we are built up and not by sermons on morals. Satan is very disturbed when sermons are

preached on grace, but he rejoices when the vein of indignation and anger rises in the minister's forehead and he preaches a sermon on morality. What he especially hates is a sermon of grace, because it is through grace that we become different people, and the results of a different life flow out of that. The apostle preached grace. That's what made him difficult to understand. It's very simple for a person who understands grace.

I know in my own experience, when I was in the insurance business in Alabama, the first epistle of Paul that I read was the Epistle to the Romans. And I found it intriguing and exciting, but I had already come to understand something about grace. So to me, Romans has always been a simple epistle so far as its major themes are concerned. Now, I must confess there are many clauses and phrases in Romans that I don't fully understand yet. But nevertheless as an epistle, it's an epistle of the gospel of the grace of God, and I have rejoiced in it for a number of years now.

What is the duty of a Protestant minister, to preach on morality? No. The duty of a minister of the grace of God is to focus the minds of his listeners on the sovereign grace of God. There is a place in the city of Aarau, in Switzerland where one can ascend a little mountain side, and there on a bench, the Swiss love to have places like this, sit on a bench, a public kind of bench and have a marvelous view of the Swiss Alps. One difficulty with the place, however, is that every two or three years the growth of the trees becomes such that it's necessary to thin it out again, so that you can see the Alps, because the growth of the trees prevents one from seeing the beauty. Well, it is the work of every preacher of the gospel that Paul preached to clear away the brush, to clear away the trees that prevent us from seeing the sovereignty of the grace of God and the pureness of it. So that's what I conceive my duty to be. One of the major duties is to preach the sovereign grace of God in such a way that you understand its grace. That's one reason why I lay a great deal of stress upon the doctrine of the bondage of the will, because it is on this point that today so many confuse the grace of God, and what issues is not grace, but a mixture of grace and morality. And we want to get away from that. And I wouldn't do it so much, except that so many of my brethren who are

preachers of the Lord Jesus Christ are not doing it, and therefore I think I must make up for the lack that some of them are having in preaching the grace of God.

Now, the apostle has been talking about the failure of the Jew from the human side. And he has said that the failure of the Jew from the human side of things is two-fold. They have pride of self-righteousness. He said in the 3rd verse of Romans 10, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And then also as the root cause of this he speaks of their unbelief. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And Israel has failed because of unbelief, and that in turn, with its trust in human morality, has led to the pride of self-righteousness, but the root of both is the failure to heed the word of God. "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent word." We often sing that, but that is really a wonderful truth.

Now, Paul turns to discuss righteousness, the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the Law. And then to appeal, in the end of the passage that I have read, to the universality of the gospel invitation. Listen to what he says in the 5th verse of Romans 10, " For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." There is such a thing as legal righteousness. It is the righteousness that one obtains by seeking to do the Law. Paul talks about his own righteousness, which he sought from the works of the Law. But he carefully distinguished his own righteousness from the righteousness of God, which is grounded upon the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, men naturally tend to want to justify themselves because men are born sinners, and the result is that they seek to justify themselves and to justify themselves before God by seeking to gain salvation by their own good works. There was a man who came to the Lord Jesus, just like that rich young ruler about which we spoke last Sunday. This time however, it was a young lawyer, and he came to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he had a question for him. It's a question that's just as relevant as Easter Sunday 1981. This young lawyer came up to him and he said, "Master, what shall I do to

inherit eternal life?" Now, in the original text that's something like this, "What great thing shall I accomplish that I may, by the performance of it, inherit eternal life?"

Now, the Lord Jesus analyzed the condition perfectly as one might expect. He saw that this young man was trusting in his good works, and had not yet learned that there was nothing that he could do that would gain him justification. So he said to the young man, "What is written in the Bible? What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" The young man replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said, "You've answered very well. That's a very good answer. Now, this, do, and you shall live." But there is a careful distinction in our Lord's words. He had said, "What great thing shall I do? What magnificent, beneficent work is there that I may accomplish that God will reward me for the doing of it with eternal life?" But Jesus said, "What does the Law say?" Well, the Law says you shall love the Lord perfectly and your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said, "This go on doing." It is the difference between one great act, one magnificent act by which one may gain eternal life, and the constant never-ending obedience as long as we are on this earth. Now, when our Lord, in effect says, if you are on the works way of salvation, you must begin with your first breath, and you must perfectly "love the Lord your God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself from that first breath on through to the last breath that you draw. And having done that perfectly, then you shall inherit eternal life." That's how hard it is to gain eternal life by what we do.

Now, the fact that we are born sinners, and we have a sinful nature, that is evidence, of course, that this is only at the most a hypothetical thing for us. Only one man ever obeyed the Law, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the sanction of the Law is death, and all of us abide under death. And part of the results of abiding under death is that our minds are blackened and darkened, our wills are rebellious against God. Our emotions are corrupt. We stand in sin and under divine judgment.

Last Sunday, in a fit of inspiration, I suggested to the congregation that we would just stop for a moment or two and give those of you have managed to from the time you breathed your first breath to your present breath, you have lived up to the Law perfectly; you've loved the Lord your God with all your with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul. But give you an opportunity to stand up and give a confession to that effect so that the rest of us may gain upon your perfectly righteous countenance. [Laughter] And you know we didn't have a single one to stand up.

Now, I recognize some people in the audience that I might not see again until Christmas, [laughter] and so consequently I think that it might be nice to give you an opportunity also to stand on your feet [laughter] and tell us how you have managed to live in one hundred percent righteousness from the time that you were born. No, I don't want to embarrass you, because there would be no one of you who would dare to do it, and if you did, everyone else would know that you were not telling the truth. I heard of a preacher who once did that, and there was a man who stood in the back rather hesitantly, and the preacher said, "Do you want to confess that you have lived in perfect righteousness and holiness, absolutely perfect until this time?" He said, "No, but I'd like to put in a word for my wife's first husband." [Laughter] You know, the Bible is so plain, and so clear, it's remarkable that we don't get the message. [Laughter] "Run, John, and live, the law commands, But gives me neither legs nor hands; Yet better news the Gospel brings, It bids me fly and gives me wings."

So the apostle, he's saying the same thing that Jesus said. He said Moses spoke about the righteousness of the Law. It's the man who does those things who shall live by them, but there is no man, among us mortal men, who could ever keep the Law. Therefore we are under divine condemnation. What do we need? Why, we need the righteousness of faith, that's what we need. And so the apostle speaks of this in verse 6 through verse 10. Now, he does it in a rather difficult way, I must confess, and it is difficult if we do not understand the Old Testament at this point. So I'm going to turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 30, and read a few verses beginning at the 10th verse through the 14th verse. Now, Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 10 through verse 14 is a passage that

is part of the Palestinian covenant. It is the covenant that God imposed upon Israel that governed their possession of the land of Palestine. He said to them, "If you keep my covenant, if you keep my words you shall be able to stay in this land. But if you do not keep my words, then you shall be cast out of the land. And furthermore, you'll be scattered to the four corners of the earth. That is what has happened to the nation Israel and that is why they have been scattered to the four corners of the earth. In the 10th verse of Deuteronomy 30 he says,

"If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments (notice the plural) and his statutes (plural) which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart (Now notice that is a singular commandment), and with all thy soul. For this commandment (Notice, not commandments; these commandments, but this commandment, he's not talking about works righteousness here, he's talking about the commandment as he's just put it there, of turning to the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul. He's talking about faith. He's talking about faith in the Mosaic Law.) For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

In other words, Moses is simply saying that the word of faith is not something that we have to go and get. It's not something difficult. It's the simple response of the heart to the word of God. Now, the apostle, by analogy, speaking rhetorically uses those expressions here in verse 6 and following, he says with reference to the righteousness of God, and remember, Paul writes from the standpoint of the finished work of the Lord Jesus. The cross has already taken place. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into

heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)" In other words, we do not have to go into heaven to precipitate an incarnation by which the second person of the divine trinity should take to himself human nature and come down upon this earth. We don't have to do that. It has already been done, Paul is affirming.

Furthermore, we don't have to say, or the word of faith, the righteousness of God does not say, "Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)" We do not have to descend into the depths and bring up Christ in his resurrection so that he ascends to the right hand of the Father. The work of the Son of God in coming, as the incarnate second person, dying on the cross, entering into his grave, coming forth from the grave in victorious resurrection, has already been accomplished. It is not something that we do; it's something that we trust. It's not something that we are responsible for ourselves. We simply, through the word of God, observe what has happened for sinners, and we trust ourselves in what God has done for us. The apostle is saying then, there is no human merit that God recognizes. There is no human supplement that we must offer to the work of God. The righteousness of God is not something that we attain to by our activities. It is something that we obtain through free grace. It's not a new start that we need to start over to try to keep the Law of God from today. But is an absolutely new heart that comes through the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; who through the gospel of Christ transforms us, gives us new life so that we respond in faith and repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the Old Testament expression of the righteousness of God.

But Paul further explains in verse 9 and verse 10, speaking of the New Testament expression of it, having put it rhetorically in those Old Testament words, he speaks now most plainly in verse 9 and 10. What is the word of faith? "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That's the word of faith. That's the word concerning the righteousness of God. What is it that we have to do? Believe it. Confess it. That's all the apostle says.

Now, I just want to say a couple of words about two words the apostle uses here. He says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead." Unfortunately due to the fact that many people do not read the Bible too carefully, we have come to think that the way to be saved is to believe in your heart, and then in the presence of a group of people make a public profession of faith by raising our hands in the meeting, coming down front, and acknowledging in front of people that we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, there is nothing wrong in doing that, so far as the act itself is concerned, except insofar as it might give the impression that this is the way a person might be saved.

This is not what Paul is talking about. He didn't know anything about a church meeting in which "Just as I Am" was sung at the end of the meeting, and people invited forward to confess publicly their faith in Christ. What he is talking about is something far more significant than that. He is talking about the confession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ on Monday, outside of the spiritual meeting on Sunday morning. He's talking about confessing faith on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. He's talking about confessing it in our business world. He's talking about confessing it among our friends, whether female or male, our friends and our family. He's talking about a definite confession of the faith that has been implanted in our hearts by the Lord Jesus Christ; then, every time, when it costs us something, not in the church meeting on Sunday morning. "That if thou shalt confess and believe, these are not two unrelated matters, the confession is something that is believed, and the faith is something that is confessed. One is outward and is in effect, confession. The other is inward and is the cause. Confession is then, not a testimony before a church. They become, when we have testimonies, like a friend of mine says, "They frequently become nothing more than bragamonies." This is the confession of the life that we have in Christ after our baptism.

You see, when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and has really entrusted his life to him, there is a transformation within his inmost being. He's given new life. The first thing that he wants to do is to please the Lord who has done so much for him. And so, he comes to the elders of

the church and he says, "I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been saved, and I'd like to confess my faith in baptism." That's the way we confess our faith. We don't confess it by raising our hands. We don't confess it by signing a decision card. We don't confess our faith by coming down front. We confess our faith by coming to the elders and saying, "I'd like to be baptized in water." That's the biblical way to confess our faith. And so, we confess our faith in water baptism, and then in the life day by day; the Mondays, and Tuesdays that follow through the rest of our lives. We confess the Lord Jesus Christ, having believed in our hearts that God has raised him from the dead.

The trouble, or one of the major troubles that we have in Christianity, of course, is that there are many people who are confessing who are not really confessors of the grace of God, truly and righteously. And that's why we read in the newspapers startling statements like, "Preacher robs couple." Now, you would never see headlines, "Automobile salesman robs couples." Well, that's what you expect, I guess. [Laughter] But preacher or preacher does this, because even the world knows that once having made a profession of faith in Christ, there should be some kind of confession in the life that follows.

Now, Paul says, "That if thou shalt confess that Jesus is Lord." That's the recognized formula of confession, Jesus is Lord. Now, that was a confession of the divine nature of the Son of God, for that was the confession that he was the Yahweh of the Old Testament that the divine nature and the divine attributes reside in him. "If thou shalt confess that Jesus is Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead." This confession of Jesus as Lord arose in persecution. The Christians were hailed before the authorities and they were told, "Confess that Caesar is Lord." Well, the Christians were free to do a lot of things, but one thing that they were not free to do was to confess that there was any other Lord by Jesus Christ. So they would say, "Confess that Caesar is Lord." And I can just imagine some Christians, or professing Christians saying, "Go ahead and confess that he is Lord. It won't hurt anything, and then later on, you can make it plain to others." Not those early Christians. Jesus was Lord, and they confessed their faith, and they lost their lives for saying, "Jesus is Lord." Because they knew that there was an authority

higher than Rome and that ultimately they would appear before that authority, and the human authority down here was just a little puppet that sat over in Rome. But the authority resides in heaven. "If you confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

You know, when the Lord Jesus said around the last supper, "I'm going to be betrayed, and one of you is going to do it." The apostles were shocked, they were amazed. They were apostles, chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ. You can hear them now. Peter speaks, "Is it I, Lord?" John, "Is it I, Lord?" Thomas, "Is it I, Lord?" Nathaniel, "Is it I, Lord?" James, "Is it I, Lord?" And so on around the table, and finally to Judas, "Is it I, master?" No man calls Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? That means that faith is a gift of God, first of all. No man calls Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. But the man who has received that faith from God through the Holy Spirit is the man who must confess that Jesus is Lord, regardless of what men say. "If thou shalt believe that Jesus is Lord, confessing that, thou shalt be saved."

There is a second article of faith here. He says, "And believe that God has raised him from the dead." That's an important thing, because even in the apostle's day, there were many lords, he said. He said, there are lords many, but there is only one real Lord, and that real Lord is our Lord Jesus Christ. And so he says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead." He's the Lord who has been raised from the dead. He is the only Lord. And so he must be confessed as such. "One Lord Jesus Christ, but whom are all things, and we by him," Paul says. Well, what does that mean? That means obviously that the Christian faith is not one among many. There are people who say, "After all, are we not all going to heaven, we're just going different ways?" No, no. The Bible speaks so plainly against that that's its remarkable that people even can abide that and at the same time confess Christianity.

Listen to what the Apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Listen to Paul, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which

is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Listen to our Lord himself, "I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Do be generous, Paul. Paul would never have answered a question like that with generosity. For when one is generous with God's truth, he is stealing something that does not belong to him. And so it's not surprising that in the Bible the apostles and our Lord do not respond to "Do be generous." For after all, to lead a man down a path that leads to nowhere is the worst thing that you can do for him. If it's bad for me to say to you Christianity is an exclusive system of truth, if it is bad to say that, if it is bad to say that, so that you respond saying, "Christianity is narrow-minded, bigoted." I'll rest much easier than if I were to say to you, "Well, there may be some provision made for all of you somehow, but most of us, in this room at least, are going through faith in Christ." I'd be very dishonest. In fact, I couldn't do you anything worse than to tell you, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, that there was another way, when there is no other way.

So he says you must confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead. He stands both within history and without history. He is the conqueror of death. He is the one who said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Men have always recognized that Jesus Christ was different from the rest of us. Lord Byron, the profligate poet, said, "If ever a man was God or God was man, Jesus Christ was both."

There was a man by the name of Lee, who was an outstanding Christian leader in China before the present regime, who came to this country. Lee seems to be a popular name for Koreans and Chinese. I am Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Divinity School in Chicago, and I have in my classes right now more than one Lee. And I have one of the Lee's from Korea. He's from Seoul, Korea. He's a man of about thirty-five to forty years of age. I'd say about thirty-seven. He sits right in front of me in a couple of my classes. He's a man who has a church that has so many people coming to it in Seoul, Korea it would take two or three Believers Chapels to get into his congregation. He has a gigantic congregation. And here he is sitting, and I am teaching

him the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament and Ecclesiology and Eschatology and things like that. He's a very interesting man and very responsive to the word of God. Lee, it's almost like Johnson. I think everybody in Korea is names either Lee or Kim. [Laughter] But after all, I do have a claim for fame; they don't have grass named after them. [Laughter]

Now, Mr. Lee, there was this man named Lee, who came from China, and he spoke in a modernistic church in California. At the conclusion of the message, a young college student propounded this question to him, "Why should we export Christianity to China, when you Confucianism in your country?" Mr. Lee said, "There are three reasons. First, Confucius was a teacher and Christ is a Savior. China needs a Savior more than a teacher. In the second, Confucius is dead and Christ is alive. China needs a living Savior. And in the third place," he said, "the day is coming when Confucius is going to have to stand before Jesus Christ to be judged by him, and China needs to know Christ as Savior before she meets Him as judge." Confucius said, "How dare I lay claim to holiness or love? A man of endless craving who never tires of teaching, I might be called, but nothing more." Mohammed, it is said, covered his head and cried out that unless God cast the cloak of mercy over him, there was no hope for him at all. We are speaking of something that is absolutely exclusive.

Now, Paul explains in the 10th verse, by saying, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He's not distinguishing confession and faith. These are things that are absolutely indistinguishable, faith and confession. One is simply the root, the other is the fruit. But that is a neat rhetorical summary for everything that he has said. And it winds up on the note, that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Ah, we don't like that word salvation, do we? I don't think there's any word in the Christian vocabulary that makes some Christians more uncomfortable than the word "saved." It reminds us of so many people who have come up to us and have button-holed us, and have said, "Brother, are you saved?"

Ray Steadman, in a recent book on the Epistle to the Romans has said that he will never forget the startled look on the face of a man who came up to him in a movie theater. The seat beside him was vacant, and so the man walked over and was getting ready to sit down, but he spoke to Mr. Steadman and said, "Is this seat saved?" And Mr. Steadman said, "No, but I am." [Laughter] And he said he promptly found a seat across the aisle. [Laughter] Somehow the word saved threatens all of our religious complacency and angers the self-confident and the self-righteous alike. We don't like to talk about salvation, but when you get to heaven, it will be a familiar phrase on the lips of our Lord and the apostles. You better get used to it, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Now, having said that, the apostle concludes by showing, "The Scriptures support what I am saying. This is not something different. This is not something unique. Why, you'll find it in Isaiah, and you'll find it in other passages of Scripture." Listen to what he says, "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Do you know what that means? That means that no matter who you are you may become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, of course, we know that from the divine standpoint there are the elect and the non-elect, but we don't know who they are. The invitation goes out to everyone. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." There is no contradiction between "whosoever" and "chosen in him before the foundation of the world." And so we say to you, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

Now, the apostle tells us exactly what that means, for he says, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." The Jews are saved the same way the Gentiles are; the Gentiles are saved the same way the Jews are. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Everybody is poor, everybody is lost, everybody is condemned, but at the same time, God is rich to all who call upon him, whether Jew or Gentile. And finally, he concludes by saying, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." What does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord?

Why, it means simply to say with full meaning, "Lord save me." That's all that it means, "Save me from my sins. Save me from my guilt. Save me from my condemnation."

About fifteen years ago, a plane was approaching an airport in California. I have the clipping before me that describes what happened. But when that plane drew near to the airport, the pilot was heard to say, "I've been shot. I've been shot. Oh my God, help." And that was the last of that plane. Everybody lost their lives. Afterward, it was discovered that there was a young man on the plane who had gone to Las Vegas, had lost all of his money. He had managed to get a 357 Magnum pistol on board with six shots. All of them were found shot. And here was a man who cried out in his moment of death, "God help me." No one will ever know, of course, in what sense he said, "God help me." But if that was the "God help me," of words without music, he's lost forever.

When Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." He's talking about calling upon him in virtue of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's rather interesting to me that in the Old Testament it is said, I think of Abraham as I remember, that he called upon the name of the Lord three times, and every time that it is said that Abraham called upon the name of the Lord, it is in the vicinity or right by the side of an altar of sacrifice. For when we call on the Lord, we call on him who has offered an atoning sacrifice. And we plead that atoning sacrifice for our salvation. That's what Paul means when he says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Christ has paid the debt for sinners, and I may call upon God for salvation by virtue of what Jesus Christ has done.

There is an old story, it's so old that it's really trite, but I still think that there's a truth in it. There was a young boy, who didn't have really all of his senses, on the coast of England. He had learned enough from people speaking to him to know that he had a debt to God which he could not pay. He had the concept of God shutting him up in a prison and being unable to escape. And finally, a Christian lady took his trembling hand in hers, and gently said, "No, Matt, you need not be shut up in prison, for Jesus Christ has paid the debt for sinners." And the Holy Spirit caused the light of the gospel to shine down into that darkened heart. And when he saw, as weakly as he saw it

that Christ had died for sinners, tears welled up in his eyes, and he looked toward heaven and said, "Man that paid, Matt says, "Thank you, thank you." That's the response to the gospel. That's the confession of our faith.

And so, when Paul says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." That grace. That's what we try to do when we preach, is clear away the obstructions so that we can see that salvation is by grace through that which Jesus Christ has done. If you are here in this audience this morning, we invite you to come to Christ, not down front, not to raise your hand, not to sign a decision card, not to be put on our mailing list; we invite you to recognize that Christ has died for sinners, that you are a sinner, and that provision has been made for your salvation. Come to Christ. Call upon the name of the Lord. Believe in him, you shall not be ashamed. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That's a wonderful word, "saved," I love it. You'll love it, too, when you experience that salvation.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful texts from Paul's letter to the Romans. How suitable they are for us. If there should be someone here who has not come to know Christ, O God, through the Holy Spirit, bring the salvation of Jesus Christ to them. May, O God, if it should please Thee, there not be one person leave this auditorium who is not le...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]