

Confess and believe

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[0 : 00] Now let us turn to Romans chapter 10. Romans chapter 10 at verse 9. Reading again at verse 8, but what saith it? The scriptures, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.

That is the word of faith which we preach, 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. 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.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

[1 : 21] And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

In an autobiographical account, Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, tells us of his conversion.

His sister used to pray for him three times a day. And not only that, but he was a burden upon his mother's heart.

He records for us the experience that took place in his life on an unforgettable day, a day when his mother happened to be away from home, some 70 or 80 miles distant.

To pass the time, Hudson Taylor picked up a gospel tract from among some pamphlets.

[2 : 35] And he decided that he would read the story in the tract, and leave aside the sermon material. At the time that he was reading that tract, his mother was praying for him.

And in the course of reading through the tract, he came across the phrase, the finished work of Christ. He asked, why does the author of this tract use that phrase?

What was finished? And the answer came to him, a full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for sin.

The debt was paid for our sins, says Hudson Taylor. If the whole work was finished, and the whole debt paid, what was there left for me to do?

Nothing. Nothing in the world. But to fall down on one's knees and accepting this Saviour and his salvation, praise him forevermore.

[3 : 52] That's how he was converted. So simple. The finished work of Christ. He believed on it.

He accepted Christ as his Saviour. He kneeled there. And received Christ into his heart. I like the beautiful lines.

And I've quoted them on another occasion. The beautiful lines that Hudson Taylor quotes himself. Nothing either great or small.

Nothing, sin or no. Jesus died and did it all long, long ago. It is finished. Yes, indeed, finished every jot.

Sinner, this is all you need. Tell me, is it not? Weary, working, burdened one. Wherefore toil you so?

[4 : 55] Cease your doing. All was done long, long ago. And what Paul has been underscoring in this epistle is the finished work of Christ.

He has been at pains to show the Jews their futility in trying by human effort to appease God and thereby gain his favour.

What Paul has been saying in this epistle is this, that it is beyond the capability of any human being to place God in his debt.

And that is something that we must never forget. It is beyond our capability to put God in our debt.

But what Paul goes on to do is to show us whether we be Jew or Gentile, how God has placed at our disposal the way of recovery from the lostness and the degradation of sin.

[6 : 07] And the way of sin is through God's own Son. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh condemned sin in the flesh.

You see, as we have seen in this epistle, the holy law of God which had been transgressed by us demanded our punishment.

And that inevitably meant for us death in its most extreme form. Not just physical death, but the death of the whole person.

Spiritual death as well as physical death. But thank God he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus, to fulfil that law.

And the Lord Jesus rendered perfect obedience to it. And not only did he render perfect obedience to God's royal law, but he made satisfaction to that law for our infringement of it by dying in our place.

[7 : 27] And that is why Paul says here that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness' sake. The whole law of God is completed and finished in Christ himself.

So then we don't have to try to attempt a way of establishing a righteousness that we fondly imagine will gain us credit with God.

For as the Bible tells us, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight. You see, the righteousness that we need has been procured for us through our Lord's perfect obedience and through his substitutionary and atoning death.

As Paul says here, we don't have to climb up to heaven for it, nor do we have to descend into the abyss. And when Paul says, you don't have to climb up to heaven or descend into the abyss, he is using these opposites to show the impossibility of doing such a thing.

In other words, what Paul is saying is, and that is this, that procuring salvation is not an impossible thing. It's not beyond us.

[9 : 01] Salvation is there, and it is there for us to grasp. You recall when the Philippian jailer was awakened from his sinful stupor.

And when he asked the Apostle Paul about being saved from his past life of sin. The Apostle didn't tell the Philippian jailer that it was something that was beyond him.

No, what Paul said to that Philippian jailer was this, it's simple. You want to be saved from your past life of sin?

Well, says the Apostle, it's so simple. All you have to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

And that is what Paul is talking about here. 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.

[10 : 19] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. It's not a different salvation for the Jews and a different salvation for the Greeks or the Gentiles. There is no difference between the two peoples.

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. You see, the Jew imagined that the way of salvation was by a legal process.

He calculated that by doing certain things God would have to take cognizance of that and reward accordingly. And it's the same attitude of the Jew that is characteristic of the proud legalist of our day.

And that proud legalist may not be outside the doors of the free church. That proud legalist may be here in this church building this very evening.

[11 : 44] The proud legalist who thinks that by fulfilling a certain behavioral pattern, they have earned the right to God's favor.

That legalist believes that if they do this or that, or refrain from some unseemly conduct, that's all that matters.

The legalist believes that what is necessary is an exemplary life, characterized by love and compassion.

And so if you live an exemplary life, if you have a bit of love in your heart and compassion, then that's the righteousness that pleases God.

But oh, how far away that is from God's standard of righteousness. You see, people who think like that, these people that I've been describing, they haven't yet understood the real nature of sin, nor have they understood the holiness of God.

[13 : 15] Because when you realize the real nature of sin and understand the holiness of God, then do you realize how you cannot, by human effort, put God in your debt.

If you think along these lines, it means that you haven't realized what the Bible calls the plague of your heart. And what is the plague of your heart?

The plague of your heart is the sin of your heart. And that is what has to be eradicated from the life. And no paltry human effort can do it.

How then are we reconciled to God? We are reconciled to God through Christ Jesus.

That's the way that we are reconciled to God. Through Christ Jesus and by believing in Christ Jesus.

[14 : 21] And by confessing our belief in him. 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.

But what is it that constitutes this believing in the Lord Jesus? Well, first of all, there must be a recognition on our part of the Lordship of Jesus.

Listen to what the Apostle says, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus. Do you see how he describes Jesus? He doesn't say, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus.

He says, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus. And when Paul describes Jesus as the Lord Jesus, he is asserting the divine character of Jesus.

You see, the word Lord is the divine name for Jehovah. When you read Jehovah in the Old Testament and Lord in the New Testament, they are equivalent.

[15 : 53] And Jehovah, in Jewish thought, is the God who is supreme. The God who must be obeyed implicitly.

The God who must be worshipped reverently. That's what Jehovah means. And so when Paul calls Jesus the Lord Jesus, he is stating this, that Jesus is none other than God of very God.

God. But this God of very God became man of very man. And in human nature, the God of very God who became man of very man suffered and bled and died.

Listen to the confession of faith when it is speaking about Jesus as the mediator. The confession says this, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity being very and eternal God of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin.

Being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary of her substance, so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood were inseparably joined together in one person without conversion, composition or confusion.

[17 : 56] Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man?

and the Lord of the Holy Ghost and the one whom we believe in, the Lord Jesus, is the Son of God. Jesus is the virgin-born Son of Mary and the virgin-born Son of Mary is none other than the Christ of God, the one whom Paul refers to here as the Lord Jesus.

Now why did God's Son, the Lord Jesus, come forth from heaven's glory? Why did the Lord Jesus take our nature?

Why did he suffer and why did he die? The answer is obvious, isn't it? He did that in order to pay our debt to God.

And that is our righteousness if we will avail ourselves of it. The transaction which reconciles us to God is in terms, in these terms, that our sins, if we believe in Christ Jesus, are credited to him and his righteousness is credited to us.

[19 : 39] Well, now I ask you, do you tonight in your heart of hearts believe? Are you fully persuaded in your whole being that the Lord Jesus is the Savior?

Are you persuaded that he is the Savior that you need? And are you now resting upon him for your peace with God? I say that if you believe in that way, then you are reconciled to God.

And the faith that you have put in Christ will not fail you. You will never be disappointed if you believe in this Jesus. And this is what Paul is saying to these Jewish people.

He is saying to them, oh, how futile it is for you to try and establish a righteousness which is beyond you. How futile are your efforts?

And here is the simple thing that you've got to do, says Paul, to these Jews. It's the same thing that the Gentiles have to do and that is this, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[21 : 07] To be persuaded that the Lord Jesus is the Savior and the only Savior and to take him as your own. have you taken this Savior as your own?

Can you now make the confession with your mouth and say, yes, the heart is the organ of my faith and I have apprehended Christ as my Savior and now hear.

The mouth is the organ by which I confess him and I confess. I make it known that this Christ is my Christ and this Savior is my Savior.

But there is also the recognition too, isn't there, that Jesus rose again from the dead. That is what Paul is saying.

If thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

[22 : 20] And that's very important. On the third day our Lord rose from the tomb and he has ascended to the right hand of his father.

Now our Lord's resurrection was not merely a spiritual resurrection as the modernists of today say. You see there are many ministers and they will preach on the resurrection of Jesus but when they are preaching on the resurrection of Jesus although they won't let you know this all that they are saying about the resurrection of Jesus is that Jesus rose spiritually from the dead and that it is the spirit of Christ that is in the world today.

But you see what we are asserting and what the scriptures assert is the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In other words the dead body came to life.

The dead body of our Lord came to life and was glorified. And you might ask well why are you emphasizing the bodily resurrection of Christ?

Well the bodily resurrection of Christ is the indication to the world that the sacrifice that Christ made of himself on the cross was sufficient to pay the debt for sin.

[23 : 53] It is an indication the resurrection that the ransom was adequate and because the ransom was adequate death had to yield to its mighty conqueror and victor Christ.

And so the Christian is the man who believes that Jesus is the Lord of glory God's Son. He believes that God's Son came forth from glory to live and die for him.

He believes that the death of Christ on the cross was the adequate price paid for his salvation. And more than that the father couldn't ask for.

And the Christian believes that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. And that this same Lord Jesus is a never living present saviour.

And because Christ Jesus is a never living present saviour the Christian seeks to obey him to follow him and he seeks to promote his glory.

[25 : 17] I would question very much as you would question very much on my part I would question very much your Christianity if your living didn't conform to your belief.

I would question very much your Christianity if your behaviour was unbecoming and wasn't in keeping with Christ's standards.

And you would question my Christianity and you would question my validity to be here in this pulpit preaching the gospel if my behaviour was out of keeping with the Christian ministry.

We're not saying by remarks like that that we are seeking perfection of life. It's impossible. It's beyond us perfection of life. Many other faults that Christians have and many other faults that the minister has.

but the profession made and the life that is lived must be in keeping with what Christ expects and demands.

[26 : 34] And so we believe in the ever-living Christ who is there and who gives us his instructions and his commands and his word and who expects us to give ready obedience to these commands.

How does the Christian express his belief? He does so by publicly confessing his faith.

In his commentary John Murray puts it like this, the heart he says is the organ of faith and the mouth is the organ of confession.

Confession verifies and confirms the faith. So as far as the Christian is concerned there must be no aversion nor must there be any unwillingness to proclaim belief in Jesus as his Lord.

That's what Murray says. I read this night tonight in our hearing the first epistle of John where John says whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God God dwelleth in him.

[28 : 01] Now just think of that. In that first Christian century it required strength of conviction and not only that but it required God given courage to confess the Lordship and the Saviourhood of Christ Jesus.

You see the Roman Emperor was God and if you dare to say that there was another God you were defying the Roman Emperor and so it took great courage for any Christian in that early century to say Jesus Christ is God Jesus Christ is Lord Lord but what awaits the person who makes that confession listen to what Jesus has to say himself whosoever shall confess me before men him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven and tonight I ask you have you confessed Christ before men as your Lord and your

Saviour you say it's very hard to do that that is part of the Christian commitment that is Christian involvement this readiness to confess to men that Christ is your Saviour and your Lord if you've been converted then you must tell others mustn't you and supposing there is someone here in this congregation this evening and who knows only God himself alone knows this but perhaps you might be touched you might be awakened you might be converted maybe someone in this congregation tonight might be converted would to God they were someone who is going to leave this congregation rejoicing in a new found

Saviour now you're not going to hide it you're going to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus you're going to confess him openly and unashamedly you're going to do you're going to make this sort of declaration that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ it means that you've burned your boats and you are now going to make people know where you stand up and be counted if you're a member of any political party whether it be the Labour Party the SNP or the Conservatives you must stand up and be counted and in the same way if you're a Christian you must be ready to stand up and be counted you must burn your boats and there is no going back when you burn your boats now this method of salvation that Paul is speaking about is not beyond any of us

Paul is emphasizing and has been emphasizing in this epistle that Christ has died to atone for sin and all that we are asked to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ we are now going to confess him as Lord and Saviour the Jew and the Greek and the Greek really means the Gentile the Jew and the Gentile says the apostle are reconciled to God by the same Saviour there is no difference as the apostle 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 so the question that comes to us tonight is have we realized our need of this Saviour if you now realize your need of this

[33 : 21] Saviour here he is here is the Lord Jesus now take him take him as yours believe on him believe that he died to secure your pardon that he rose for your justification and in doing that now go forth and confess him with your mouth and tell what he has done for you that's what Paul is saying to these Jewish people as he says it to the Gentilists 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 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 but Paul goes on and this is just for a moment or two Paul to ask how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard how shall they hear without a preacher how shall they preach except they be sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace that bring the glad tidings of good things here the apostle takes us back to the prophet Isaiah and as we have seen he is constantly taking us back to the Old Testament and proving all that he says from the Old Testament what did

Isaiah predict in chapter 28 that if anyone would call upon the name of the Lord he would be saved and what did Isaiah say in chapter 52 well the old prophet as he looked he saw the fall of Babylon and with the fall of Babylon there would be the liberation of Jerusalem and as the prophet scans the horizon he sees speeding across the hills the messenger coming to the city of Jerusalem to announce to the city Babylon has fallen now as a city you've been liberated oh the picture is a graphic one there are the inhabitants of the city in bondage in slavery longing for deliverance and at last here comes the messenger whose very feet to them are beautiful and the messenger has got an outstanding announcement to make what news he's got and what's the news peace salvation and that the mighty God of Zion reigns and so says Paul in this epistle to the Romans that is how it is with the gospel

God has sent the preacher the preacher has been given the commission to go forth with this gospel it's the gospel of peace says the apostle it's the glad tidings of good things and the Jews here might well ask how can people believe in a savior unless they hear about him well the apostle replies that not only has God sent his son Jesus to be the savior but he has also sent the heralds to proclaim the good tidings and people must be told that salvation is there and that it is procurable the content of the preacher's message is peace that there is peace between the sinner and God if only the sinner will come to

God through Christ and the duty of the preacher is to tell how God has provided the way of escape for the sinner through Christ Jesus and to ask the sinner to believe in this savior and to follow him as his Lord how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace that bring glad tidings of good things my friend be thankful to God that it has been your privilege to listen to the gospel under different ministries and that the glad tidings and the good news has come from God to you and God is proposing to you terms of peace and God is asking you to be reconciled to himself through his son don't keep on resisting don't keep on saying that's not for me don't keep rejecting these the news gladly accept

[39 : 56] Christ you know in the book of the prophet Isaiah chapter 5 the prophet tells there the parable of the vineyard and he tells us how here is a vineyard and the owner he says has done everything everything that is possible for him to do in order for this vineyard to produce the right kind of fruit but instead of the vineyard producing the right kind of fruit it has produced wild grapes and that's not what the owner of the vineyard wanted at all and the prophet Isaiah says what more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it and so it is with salvation and its availability to those who hear the gospel what more can be done what more can

God do what more can the preacher do it's there salvation it's there for us to grasp it's there for us to accept will we not take it let's listen just once more to Hudson Taylor reading his tract if he says the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid what was there left for me to do nothing in the world but to fall down on one's knees and accepting this saviour and his salvation praise him forevermore

I finish the sermon by quoting another verse of these beautiful lines that Hudson Taylor uses this when he from his lofty throne stooped to do and die everything was fully done listen to his cry it is finished yes indeed finished every jot sinner this is all you need tell me is it not let us pray we give thee thanks oh lord for this salvation which was secured at so great a price it was secured by the blood of the son of god and we thank thee that thou art offering this salvation to us in the gospel that the terms of peace between the sinner and god are proposed and that all that the sinner has to do is to believe in the lord jesus christ with all his heart with all his being and then to go and confess this christ before men we pray thee that we may not be among those who fail in making use of the means but may we gladly avail ourselves of thy salvation and rejoice in thee forever more take us to our homes in safety and forgive our sins for christ's sake amen so to

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