

Going on Mission

November 12, 2023

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Romans 10:1-17

Session Outline

1. Knowing the Message (Romans 10:1-8)
2. Believing the Message (Romans 10:9-13)
3. Sharing the Message (Romans 10:14-17)

Theological Theme

The world is full of people who need to know salvation through Jesus Christ. The message of the gospel is meant to go to all people and the charge for Christians is to share that message with everyone they can.



Leader Guide

Going on Mission

Introduction

Where do you turn when you need encouragement or hope about a situation? While we should be thankful to have supportive friends or family, the best place for Christians to turn is to the Lord. One of the best things about having a relationship with Jesus is that you are never alone. Even when things are difficult, you have the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide you. Unfortunately, many people get overwhelmed with the difficulties of life and end up feeling like it's hopeless.

Christians are called to share the hope of the gospel with all people. The message of the gospel isn't about hope for "good people" who love God, but for broken people (all people) who receive the message and put their faith in Jesus for salvation.

- ❓ What unique circumstances of our time could make people feel like there is a lack of hope in the world?
- ❓ How does Jesus give us hope no matter what?

Session Summary

Every believer in Jesus is commanded to go on mission and spread the gospel to the whole world. Paul was concerned for his fellow Jews because so many had rejected the gospel of Christ. He wrote to the Romans about his heart to reach the lost to motivate and encourage them to take up the charge of spreading the good news of the gospel to others.

Recognizing that it is possible to have zeal for God without having the knowledge to confess and believe for salvation, Paul made the gospel message clear. The world we live in is similar to Paul's day. Too many people are searching for salvation through their own works and attempts at righteousness instead of the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus. Those who have believed in and confessed Jesus are to share the truth with others so all have opportunity to receive Jesus.

1. Knowing the Message (Romans 10:1-8)

Paul longed for his fellow Israelites to know Jesus and to accept the salvation available to all who believe through His finished work on the cross. The truth of the gospel changed Paul's life, and he spent the rest of his life sharing this good news with as many people as possible. All followers of Jesus are called to do the same.

Paul acknowledged the zeal, or intensity, that many in Israel had for the Lord. But this zeal was not based in knowledge. This is the same thing that plagues many today. Many count themselves as religious and have passion for some version of spirituality yet have little knowledge of the real Jesus. Paul also once lived this way, but all of that changed when he met Jesus.

- ❓ Why is zeal, or passion, without knowledge dangerous? Why is passion on its own not enough to reconcile us with God?

Israel's lack of knowledge was not the only problem. They had not submitted to the righteousness of God and relied on their own efforts. This concerned Paul. When people refuse to accept the righteousness of God and think they can earn their way to salvation, it is heartbreaking for those who know the truth. Paul spent his life sharing with others how they could know Jesus and trust Him as Savior. Paul wanted his fellow Israelites to come to the life-changing knowledge of Jesus.

- ❓ What is your level of concern about those who don't know Jesus? What might this indicate about what you value most in life?

Note the way Paul compared the righteousness of God with the attempts of people to achieve righteousness on their own. Jesus did everything to fulfill the law perfectly. Christians no longer trust in their own efforts toward righteousness but in what Jesus has done. It is not uncommon for people today to believe they can earn their way to heaven. Many hope that at the end of their lives the good they've done will outweigh the bad and God will accept them. We may have even believed that ourselves. But Paul made it crystal clear that the truth of the gospel is the only way to salvation. We can never work our way to Jesus. Instead, we receive righteousness but trusting in what He has done for us.

Romans 10

Paul argued that only a remnant of Israel ever believed (9:27–29). In rejecting Christ Israel was following a precedent already at work in earlier days. The Jews' zeal was commendable but nevertheless misguided. The only way of acceptance before God was faith in Christ and was (and is) within the reach of all. Those who believe in their heart and confess with their mouth "Jesus is Lord" will be saved. People cannot believe unless they can hear, and they cannot hear without a preacher. Though Israel heard, they still rejected God's message.



Application: Who has God placed in your life that you can share the good news of Jesus with? What challenges you in doing that?

2. Believing the Message (Romans 10:9-13)

The righteousness of God is gained by faith in Jesus. It is not possible to gain this by our own works or efforts. Instead, Paul stressed the need to confess and believe in the person of Jesus Christ. The act of confession is not just admitting you have done wrong or failed to do right. Confession is also about agreeing with God. When we confess the Lord Jesus, we are agreeing with what God said about Jesus and with what Jesus said about Himself. It means we recognize Jesus is God and His work on the cross is the only way to salvation.



Why do many find the biblical path to salvation too hard to believe? What makes us think we must do something more to be accepted by God? Where are you tempted to believe this specifically?

Confession accompanies belief. Belief is more than intellectual assent to the claims of the gospel. It means putting trust in the claims of the gospel to accomplish what God has said. We are “putting weight” on the message of the gospel to uphold us and deliver what God has promised. Many claim belief in Jesus on some level, but biblical belief means “going all in” on the claims of Jesus. This type of belief doesn’t just affect the way we think; it affects the way we live every day.

We cannot be saved by our own actions. We can only be saved through Jesus. Paul said believing in Christ produces righteousness and confessing results in salvation. Anyone who has this belief will not be put to shame. We will fall short, but Jesus still loves and sees us.



If you have believed in and confessed Jesus as Lord, share your experience. If not, how might God be calling you to respond to Him?

In Paul’s cultural context, there had always been division between the Jewish people and the Gentiles. The Jews were God’s people throughout history, and they followed the Mosaic law. The Gentiles had limited understanding of God and were viewed as outsiders. However, Paul made a radical statement that, in Christ, no distinction would exist between the two groups. No matter their background, anyone who confesses Jesus is Lord has been made new and whole, despite their sin. Anyone who calls on God’s name will be saved without any prerequisites.

To call on the name of the Lord is to place one's full trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the means of salvation. Those who call on the name of the Lord are proclaiming that they have no power to save themselves and are in desperate need of the saving work of Jesus on their behalf. It is important to recognize and continually remember that this calling is not only a mental assent or intellectual grasp, but a life-transforming belief that Jesus is our only hope in life and death.

As we more fully believe that Jesus is the only means by which a person is saved, we are naturally propelled toward mission for His sake. We are motivated to tell others the good news of Jesus as we realize that there is no other place for them to find true hope. This is a mission that is motivated by love for God and others.

- ❓ Application: Where have you been hesitant to agree with God fully about the message of the gospel or go "all in" on your stated belief? What is He calling you toward today?


3. Sharing the Message (Romans 10:14-17)

Paul was compelled to preach the Gospel everywhere he went and encouraged other Christians to obey the command of Jesus to do the same. Paul asked questions compelling the reader to think about those who don't know the name of Jesus: How can people be saved if they have never heard the gospel? How would they hear the gospel if no one preached it? These questions remind us that the work of the church is essential. God's people must be equipped to go out into the world and share the good news.


- ❓ What are some unique relationships and areas of influence where God might use you to share the gospel with others?

Quoting from multiple Old Testament passages, Paul said in verse 15, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news." The image of feet speaks of action, progress, and movement. Those who obey Jesus's command to share the gospel have beautiful feet. This doesn't have anything to do with the physical appearance of one's actual feet. The point is these people are about the King's business, constantly spreading the good news of the gospel to those who need it.

Sadly, those who hear the gospel but reject it will not be saved. Israel had heard the message of Jesus, yet many rejected the claims about Him.

-  Why is it important to recognize each person's individual responsibility to accept and spread the gospel? Why is it not enough to be in the "right" church or family?

Jesus is the One who sends us out on mission to share the good news (Matthew 28:18-20). God calls and equips His people with the tools they need to go out and share His word. He supplies us with the talents and gifts we need to proclaim the gospel boldly. What it means to proclaim the gospel looks different for everyone. God might be calling some people to move to a foreign country where the gospel has not yet been shared and minister to people across the globe. God might call others to build a relationship with their next-door neighbors or to invite their coworkers to church. It's important that all people hear the gospel and know how deeply God loves them so that they might believe in Him.

-  Application: How is God calling you to be on mission for Him? How will you respond? How will you take action in light of today's study?

Conclusion

Our world is lost and broken. It is impossible for any of us to do good on our own or to live perfect lives. No matter how hard we try, we cannot save ourselves by our own actions and good behavior. That is why we need a perfect Savior. Jesus's death and resurrection brought potential for new life for all. All we must do to be saved is believe in Him. His salvation is free to all people, and the Christian mission is to share this good news with others and bring more people to Christ. Wherever God calls you, whether across the world or across the street, we all have a role to play in spreading the gospel.

Every believer in Christ has the responsibility to continue spreading the gospel message so that all can hear it and respond. This mission has been given to all in the church and not only those in full-time ministry or who have moved overseas for mission work. All who follow Jesus are to share the gospel, and we leave the results of our obedience up to God. We cannot make anyone believe, but we can make sure they have heard the truth.

- ❓ Who is your “mission field”—those you know who need to hear the truth of the gospel?
- ❓ What steps will you take to have gospel conversations with these people?
- ❓ What is the biggest hindrance you deal with in talking to others about Jesus? How can you submit this challenge before Him and seek to trust Him with the results?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for the gift of salvation and for including you in His plan to reach the lost world with the gospel. Commit to being intentional about going on mission in your daily life, and pray for those around to be responsive to the gospel when you share with them.

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Romans* by Tony Merida
- *Romans 8-16 for You* by Timothy Keller
- *Be Right* by Warren Wiersbe

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

For Next Week

Session Title

- Giving Generously

Main Passages

- 1 Timothy 6:6-10,17-19

Session Outline

1. Gain of Godliness (1 Timothy 6:6-8)
2. Dangers of Greediness (1 Timothy 6:9-10)
3. Blessings of Generosity (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Memorize

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. - Romans 10:9

Historical Context of Romans

Purpose

Paul's purpose in writing Romans can be identified from his direct statements in the text and inferred from the content. He expressly wrote that he wanted to impart spiritual strength to the believers at Rome (1:11–12; 16:25–26). He asked for prayer for the difficult task he was undertaking (15:30) and that he might be able to come and see them (15:32). He hoped to enlist the Roman churches to support a mission to the west (15:23–29). The content of the letter shows that the churches experienced tensions between believers from different backgrounds. Paul wanted them to be united and to avoid dissension and false teaching (16:17–18). The content also reveals his exposition of what is essential Christianity and what are matters of indifference.

Author

Paul the apostle is the stated and indisputable author of the book of Romans. From the book of Acts and statements in Romans, we learn that Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth and on his way to Jerusalem in the spring of AD 57, to deliver an offering from the Gentile churches to poor Jewish Christians (Ac 20:3; Rm 15:25–29).

Setting

All of Paul's writings grew out of his missionary/pastoral work and were about the problems and needs of local churches. The book of Romans is also of this genre, but it is the least "local" in the sense that Paul had not yet been to Rome. This letter was his opportunity to expound the good news message (the gospel). He could discuss the essence of sin, the salvation accomplished on the cross, the union of the believer with Christ, how the Spirit works in the Christian to promote holiness, the place of the Jewish people in God's plan, future things, and Christian living or ethics. Though Paul did not write Romans as a systematic theology, his somewhat orderly exposition has been the fountain for the development of that discipline.

Special Features

Paul's letter to the Roman house churches has been preeminent among the New Testament writings for its theological and pastoral influence. It focuses on the doctrine of salvation, including the practical implications for believers as they live out the salvation given to them through Jesus Christ.

Extended Commentary

Romans 10:1-17

10:1 Paul saw no contradiction between election and prayer. Only a sovereign God, who has rights to move unilaterally in the affairs of humanity, can answer prayer. Among unbelievers we do not know beforehand who is “elect” and will come to faith upon hearing the gospel, but we can know that “God our Savior . . . wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Tm 2:3–4). Paul therefore prayed for Jewish salvation, and we must be diligent to share the good news of Jesus with everyone. It is never proper to give up on someone as “non-elect.”

10:2–3 Both zeal and true knowledge are necessary if one is truly to know God and serve him. In his zeal as a non-Christian Pharisee, Paul (then called Saul; see Ac 7:58 and note there) persecuted the church (Ac 22:3–5). Likewise, zeal among unbelieving Jews led to Jesus’s unjust execution. In spiritual blindness they not only missed God’s way of righteousness, they opposed it.

10:4 Christ is the end of the law in being both its fulfillment and its termination. Any system of salvation based on performance is excluded.

10:5–7 Paul quoted Moses on both sides of the issue. In Lv 18:5 (cp. Gl 3:12) obedience to the law brings life, but no one can keep the law and gain righteousness (as implied by Paul’s citation of Moses in v. 6). Faith-based righteousness is from Christ. He is accessible. He died for us and was raised from the dead. Moses pointed out that God’s revelation was accessible, and Paul quoted his words to show that Christ is accessible.

10:8 The nearness of the message of faith is at the heart and mouth of people, just as Moses proclaimed the nearness of God’s revelation.

10:9–10 Jesus is Lord is a confession of faith. “Lord” is the translation of the Greek word *kurios*. This is the regular way of translating the Hebrew name for God (Yahweh) in the Greek OT (the LXX). Jesus is not only the Messiah (Gk Christ = Hb Messiah), but he is also Lord (1Co 8:6). Not only do we believe that the man Jesus was raised . . . from the dead, but we also believe that he shares the same nature with God. This is the start of the understanding of Christ’s two natures, as articulated at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). Jesus is fully human and fully God. Christians by definition believe and confess this truth.

10:11–13 Paul cited biblical support for the universal offer of salvation. Salvation is for both Jew and Greek (i.e., Gentiles) since the same Lord (Gk *kurios*, v. 12) richly blesses all who call on him. The promise is for all who call on the name of the Lord (*kurios*, v. 13). As the prophet Joel said, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Jl 2:32). Jesus is the Lord.

10:14–15 What must occur for someone to call on the name of the Lord? Someone must first be sent to proclaim the gospel message, and then listeners must pay attention and believe. In the absence of any one of these factors, no one can call on the name of the Lord.

10:16–21 Paul quoted several OT passages to show that the conditions described in vv. 14–15 had been met for Israel. The gospel message was proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews listened and simply did not believe. The Gentiles heard too, and many embraced it. Paul’s citations show that the Gentile conversion was predicted in the OT. Ultimately, all peoples are a disobedient and defiant people. Israel was singled out in this way due to their consistent rejection of God’s message and messengers (see Ac 7:51–60).¹

References

1. Edwin A. Blum, “Romans,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1797–1798.

Author Bio

Tony Merida (Exalting Jesus in Romans)

Tony Merida is lead pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, NC, and associate professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC.

Timothy Keller (Romans 8-16)

Timothy Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, which he started in 1989 with his wife, Kathy, and three young sons. Dr. Keller’s books, including the New York Times bestselling *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*, have sold over 2 million copies and been translated into 25 languages.

Warren Wiersbe (Be Right)

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of *Back to the Bible*, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.