

Saved
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Romans 10:5-15

Do you know how to have a relationship with God in this life and spend eternity with Him in Heaven after this life? It's simple; ready? "Be PERFECT!" Got it?

I know what you're thinking. "I can't be perfect and neither can you! I know I'm not perfect and God surely knows I'm not perfect. Being perfect can't be the way!" Everybody knows that "nobody's perfect."

Who says we have to "be perfect?" Jesus did; really? At the end of the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5:48 (ESV) Jesus said, ⁴⁸ *You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Someone even remotely acquainted with the life of Jesus and the meaning of Christmas and Easter would scratch their heads. If people could be perfect then why did God send His Son to die on our behalf?

John MacArthur writes: *"Though this standard is impossible to meet, God could not lower it without compromising His own perfection. He who is perfect could not set an imperfect standard of righteousness. The marvelous truth of the gospel is that Christ has met this standard on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:21)."*

We can't gain a relationship with God by trying to "be perfect," but that's exactly what the "religious" people in Paul's day were trying to do.

Big Idea: To know God now, and spend eternity with Him in Heaven doesn't require perfection; it's about faith in what Jesus did on the cross for all mankind.

- In Romans eight we learned if you have the Spirit of Christ living in you, you have been "made right" with God and nothing can separate you from His love. No longer slaves to sin we

have freedom in Christ. It would have been logical for Paul to move into how to live this life “in Christ.” (Rom.12)

- Paul was heartbroken for the Jewish people who were still striving to be perfect in keeping the Law of Moses, and he spent chapters 9-11 trying to make them understand. He wrote that he would have been willing to “*be forever cursed – cut off from Christ! – if that would save them.*” (Rom. 9:3)
- In Romans 10:1-4 Paul wrote: “*the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. ² I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. ³ For they don’t understand God’s way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God’s way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.*”ⁱⁱ Then Paul stated the facts: “*Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.*”ⁱⁱⁱ
- Then Paul began to quote several Old Testament passages contrasting the righteousness based on the law (of Moses) and righteousness based on faith (in Christ.)
- He actually quoted Moses from Deuteronomy 30. Look at verse eight:

⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)

- Paul was saying you don’t need to “be perfect” to know God. What you need simply involves your mouth (confession) and your heart (belief.)
- Then he gave the simple gospel message in verses nine through eleven:

⁹ ...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

- The gospel message is so simple and yet people often still don’t get it.

- Question: **How can the simplicity of verses nine and ten result in people thinking they are saved when they really are not? How can only quoting those verses risk “false positives” for salvation?**
- The gospel is so simple a child can grasp it. However, it requires explanation by the one sharing the good news. Otherwise, people think if they quote those verses, nod yes, and sign a card they’re saved. That’s a dangerous misunderstanding and it’s up to followers of Christ to “be ready to give an answer” for the hope we have in Christ. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Theologian Martyn Lloyd Jones said there are two problems with how people proclaim these verses. Some people don’t explain the gospel fully and other people add things to it. Both approaches are dangerous.^{iv}
- It is heresy to add any “deeds” to the “finished work of Christ” on cross.
- That’s why Paul had to write the book of Galatians. People were saying salvation is Jesus PLUS something else (in that case being circumcised.)
- In this lesson let’s look at the need to avoid the other extreme of not fully explaining the gospel when we are sharing our faith.
- Remember in Acts 16, Paul and Silas were in prison, an earthquake set them free, and the shaken up jailer asked: “*what must I do to be saved?*”
- ³¹ *They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.* But it goes on to say, ³² *And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household.*^v
- They gave him the headline: “Believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved.” THEN they went to his house and explained all that means.
- Getting someone to pray the sinner’s prayer isn’t wrong. What’s wrong is having them rely on that prayer if they don’t understand what it means.
- It’s up to every follower of Christ to be equipped to explain salvation.
- Look at verse nine to be sure those of us who ARE saved can explain it.

- Confess – The word means (*of one mind*); *to speak the same, to agree*:^{vi}
- If you sign a confession to a crime you agree you are guilty. In this case confession is a profession that you agree to the truth that Jesus is Lord.
- Lord (capitalized) means “supernatural master over all.”^{vii}
- The confession: Jesus is the Son of God, Lord of Lords, Lord of my life.
- As I put it a few weeks ago, I have given Him the “keys to my life.”
- “Believe in your heart” makes it plain this isn’t just, “think in your brain.”
- People often incorrectly assume being saved is repeating some words and saying they pretty much think Jesus was a real man and God’s Son.
- The word for “believe” means to “entrust.” I’m LEANING on this belief.
- “Heart” means “inner self...the volition (will), the mind, the desires, etc.”^{viii}
- Believing, in this verse, means I trust with all my inner self that God raised His son Jesus from the dead and that same God will give you eternal life.
- A side note: I tend to use the term “follower of Christ” because “believer” can mean almost anything (Yeah, I believe stuff!) and “Christian” is badly misunderstood. There’s nothing wrong with those terms, but follower OF CHRIST makes it clear I don’t have an affiliation; I have a Savior and Lord.
- When our kids made their profession of faith I was grateful that the childrens’ minister of that church sat with them in front of us and walked them through what they were doing to be sure they understood.
- We’ve used John 3:16 followed by the “Romans Road to Salvation” in sharing the gospel because those verses explain everything behind Romans 10:9 and 10. It begins with the bad news: we’re all sinners headed for hell. Then the good news: Jesus, God’s Son, died for sinners. If I confess my sin, trust Him to save me and surrender to Him as Lord of my life, I can have peace with God and eternal life forever. (Links below ^{ix})

- Now look at Romans 10:13 (ESV) ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- The context: salvation is available to all people whether Jew or Gentile.
- When we quote verse thirteen by itself our reformed bretheren can become concerned because of Calvin’s doctrine of “limited atonement.”
- I won’t attempt to sort out Calvinism vs Arminianism (I’m just glad our Lifeway writers didn’t assign me chapter nine on predestination.) ☺
- Instead, let me quote the “grandfather” of the modern reformed movement R.C. Sproul about this passage: *“We may be elect or we may not, but we cannot know for sure until we die. We may be like the thief on the cross and be brought to the Lord through the mysterious work of God through the Holy Spirit in our fleeting breath. We do not have to work through all the intricacies of doctrine so long as we understand that if we sincerely call upon the name of the Lord, we will be saved.”*^x
- Reformed or not, we all agree that it’s the Holy Spirit that does the calling and saving, it’s up to us to do the sharing. Look at verses 14 and 15:

Romans 10:14–15 (ESV) ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

- I just shared the gospel so I must have “beautiful feet!” On Zoom and Facebook LIVE you might wonder if I’m even wearing shoes!
- That “beautiful feet” quote comes from Nahum 1:15. It’s a picture of a messenger running over the mountains to declare the good news that God would deliver Israel from the Assyrian Empire. “It was this “good news” that a messenger brought to the Jews, that made his feet so beautiful.”^{xi} Isaiah and Paul applied this to sharing the good news of the gospel.^{xii}

- R.C. Sproul again, *“Evangelism is one of the greatest privileges that God gives to the church...God could have preached his Word from the clouds without any human participation, but he chose the means to accomplish it, chiefly, the foolishness of preaching. God gave us the unspeakable privilege of participating in his majestic program of redemption, which he planned from the foundation of the world.”*^{xiii}
- Paul put it simply, *“...how can they believe on Him unless someone tells them.”* That verse sums up our whole focus on missions here and abroad.
- Every believer can participate by praying, giving, and going.
- That challenge is not just for preachers and missionaries. Even if we don't have the gift of preaching or evangelism, sharing the gospel is for all Christ-followers. In this passage today we have been equipped for that.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- How can we have a relationship with God in this life and spend eternity with Him in Heaven after this life?
- It's simple. “Be PERFECT!” Jesus said so Himself. He was setting such a high standard that we could only turn to HIM to meet it.
- The “religious” people of that day didn't get it. Some today still don't.
- They were actually trying to “be perfect” and keep the rules. Today we have religions that also teach that keeping the rules is what makes you “perfect enough” to get into Heaven.
- This is illustrated by a parable from Jesus. In Luke 18 Jesus said two men went to the temple to pray, a religious man and a sinner who was a tax collector for Rome, basically a legally sanctioned extortionist.
- Remember the prayer of Mr. Self Righteous? “Thank God I'm not like that sinner over there. Here's the list of rules I keep. I'm pretty great, right?”
- Mr. Sinner beat his chest crying out to God. He didn't even feel worthy to sit in the main section or lift his eyes toward Heaven. Oh “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”^{xiv} Who got it right? Mr. I'm Perfect or Mr. I'm a Wretch?

- Jesus pointed to the humble sinner and said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.”^{xv}
- Jesus’ parable is picture of Paul’s point in Romans 10.
- The “religious” types cling to trying to be “right with God” by keeping the law. Christ has already accomplished what the law couldn’t do.
- We can’t be perfect, so we simply have to confess and surrender to His Lordship and believe (trust, lean with all your heart on) the truth that He died for your sins, rose from the grave, and lives forever as our Lord.
- It’s a simple message: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” and “anyone who trusts in Him will never be ashamed.”
- Though it’s simple, it must be explained in order to penetrate the heart.
- Sharing the good news is the job of all followers of Christ. The question for us is, will we be the messengers with “beautiful feet” that run across the mountains proclaiming that truth?

ⁱ THE MACARTHUR BIBLE COMMENTARY Copyright © 2005 by John

ⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 10:1–3). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 10:4). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^{iv} <https://www.mljtrust.org/sermons-online/romans-10-9-10/essential-for-salvation/>

^v Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ac 16:30–32). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^{vi} Thomas, R. L. (1998). [New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition](#). Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

^{vii} Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^{viii} *ibid*

^{ix} Romans Road and “How to be Saved (SBC)”
<https://www.gotquestions.org/Romans-road-salvation.html>
<http://www.sbc.net/knowjesus/theplan.asp>

^x Sproul, R. C.. Romans (St. Andrew's Expository Commentary) (p. 353). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

^{xi} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 548). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{xii} Isaiah 52:7; Eph. 6:15.

^{xiii} Sproul, R. C.. Romans (St. Andrew's Expository Commentary) (p. 354).
Crossway. Kindle Edition.

^{xiv} [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 18:13). Wheaton, IL:
Crossway Bibles.

^{xv} *ibid*