

Believing and Confessing

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening for a short while, with the Lord's help and guidance, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 10, page 1140, and if we take as our text the words of verses 9 and 10.

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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Everyone loves the parables which Jesus told, because in the parables we are given a window into the challenging truths of the Bible.

We know that Jesus told many parables, but one parable with which we are very familiar is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in chapter 16 of Luke's Gospel.

Because in that parable, Jesus tells the story about a rich man who was clothed in purple, and he feasted every day. And he also tells the story about this beggar named Lazarus, who was covered in sores, and was only fed with what fell from the rich man's table.

[1 : 35] And in the parable, Jesus tells us that both of these men died. And Lazarus was carried into the presence of Abraham in paradise, while the rich man woke up in hell.

And at first the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to provide some comfort for him by dipping the tip of his finger in some water to cool his tongue in hell's tormenting flames.

But Abraham said that that was impossible because of the great chasm there was between heaven and hell. Therefore, in a second attempt in the parable, the rich man, he begged Abraham to send Lazarus back into the world to warn his five brothers about God's impending judgment.

But in the parable, we're told that Abraham again answered and said, they have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them. And yet the rich man, he persisted a third time by saying, if someone from the dead goes to them, then they will repent.

But it's at that point in the parable, the parable then concludes with a punchline. And it's Jesus that speaks. It's no longer Abraham who's speaking.

[3 : 01] But Jesus speaks directly to his Jewish audience. And he says, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

And that was the purpose of Jesus telling the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It wasn't to emphasize that the poor go to heaven and the rich go to hell.

It wasn't to emphasize and draw attention to the chasm that exists between heaven and hell. The purpose of the parable was to stress to those who heard it, which now includes me and you, it was to stress to us that unbelief and hardness of heart in repeatedly hearing the gospel.

It results in this not responding to the gospel. And what Jesus says, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

And that's what Paul is addressing in this section of his letter to the Romans because he's saying that when the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, failure to believe and failure to confess Jesus as Lord is inexcusable.

[4 : 27] It's inexcusable. And Paul is stressing to us that as those who have heard the gospel preached to us for many, many years, we are without excuse if we fail to believe in a risen Christ and be saved from the coming judgment.

But what Paul presents to us this evening in the words of our text is the simplicity and the glory of our beautiful gospel.

Because in these few words, Paul shows us what it means to be a Christian. That if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, then we will be saved.

And so all I would like us to do this evening is consider these precious words. But I would like us to do so under three headings. Their context, their content, and their confidence.

Their context, their content, and their confidence. So we look firstly at their context. Their context. If you look at verse 1 of chapter 10, Paul says, Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

[5 : 53] For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

So this is the context. And every text in the Bible, it must always be read and understood within its context. Because a text taken out of context and used as a pretext only makes a con of the text.

A text taken out of context and used as a pretext only makes a con of the text. And that's what can happen so often with Scripture.

It can be used and abused to suit our own ends and fit in with and support our own thoughts and our own theology. But Scripture must always be read and understood in light of Scripture and within its context.

Because the context always explains and clarifies what the text is teaching. And the same is true here in Paul's letter to the Romans. Because when it comes to Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul is touching upon every aspect of the Christian life.

[7 : 10] He's covering every area of Christian theology and doctrine in this one letter. And he does so because Paul never managed to visit the church in Rome.

And because his wish was to visit the church in Rome, because it was never fulfilled, Paul decided to write to them. And what Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, it's so full and it's so precious that we ought to read this letter and digest the depth of its teaching.

It was the reformer Martin Luther who said about the book of Romans, he said that it can never be read or considered too much or too well. And the more it is handled, the more delightful it becomes and the better it tastes.

And you know, Luther was right. because when we read through this letter, it's not a letter for the academic and it's not a letter for the seminary student or the minister or the theological expert.

Paul's letter was written for Christians. Paul's letter was written for those who were seeking the Lord. And it was to remind them about the gospel of Jesus Christ and remind them that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a beautiful gospel.

[8 : 25] And I say that because by the time we reach this point in his letter, Paul has spoken about many areas of Christian theology. He said, he spoke about sin back in chapter 3 where he said that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Yet, the remedy to man's ruin, he said, is that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And then as Paul progressed in his letter, he addressed the issue of justification by faith alone in chapter 5.

Saying that if we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul also emphasized at the beginning of chapter 8 that the law is unable to condemn us because there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And when Paul sought to remind us at the close of chapter 8 that we have security in our salvation, he said there is security because there is nothing in life or in death that is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so by the time we reach chapter 8, Paul says that we have everything we need to be a Christian. We have everything we need. We have the gift of God, we have peace with God, we have union with Christ and we have assurance of salvation.

[9 : 50] but from chapter 9 to chapter 11 Paul begins this new section by focusing upon the unbelief and the hardness of the Jews.

Paul focuses upon Israel and the blindness of the Jews to this wonderful offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. But as Paul begins this section we are given this wonderful insight into the heart of this pastor because Paul reveals to us his pastor's heart and his desire and longing for his own people to know Jesus as their saviour.

He says in the opening verses of chapter 9 I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying my conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers

my kinsmen according to the flesh they are Israelites and to them belong the adoption the glory the covenants the giving of the law the worship and the promises to them belong the patriarchs and from their race according to the flesh is the Christ who is God over all blessed forever.

Amen. Paul had such a love for the Jews that he expresses it in such a way that he would be willing to be condemned to hell in their place but of course Paul knew that that was an impossibility yet he uses these expressions in order to portray the love and the compassion he had towards his own people because Paul himself was a Jew that's why he refers to the Jews as his brethren and his kinsmen according to the flesh but more than that the Jews were God's chosen people Israel was God's elect nation which was chosen not because it was the greatest nation of the world or the most powerful but it was chosen solely because God loved them and at the beginning of chapter 9 Paul explains that the Jews were given everything to point them to Christ they were given everything he says they were given the adoption they were made known they were known as God's chosen people they received the glory cloud that was with them through the 40 years of the wilderness they received the covenants with Abraham

Moses and David they received the law on the two tablets of stone they received the directions on how to worship God with priests and sacrifices and more than that says Paul the Jews received the promise that through their seed the Messiah would come they had been given everything absolutely everything was given to them but the problem of their unbelief was that they were blinded and they were hardened to Jesus Christ and Paul's heart is breaking for the Jews because he knows that the gospel is for them and that's what he said in the opening chapter of his letter he said that the gospel of Jesus Christ it's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Gentile and when Paul begins chapter 10 he says brothers my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved

[13:30] Paul is saying the Jews need the gospel and there is no doubt that we ought to pray for the Jews and support the missionary organizations like CWI who are trying to reach the Jews with the message of Jesus Christ but what I want us to see is that this applies to us and more closer to home because the heart of this pastor was that his own people would be saved Paul's earnest desire and prayer was that his own people whom he loved and cared for so deeply would be saved and you know when I look at the heart of Paul as a pastor I have to ask myself do I have that same heart and I suppose we all have to ask ourselves that question and ask do we have that heart do we have that same love for our own people do we have an earnest desire that those in our own community will be saved do we have a burden of prayer for our neighbors and our relatives and those whom we work with every day when Paul wrote to the churches he often said that he prayed for them with tears but do we shed tears for our community do we have the same grief and continual sorrow in our heart at the unbelief and the hardness of those around us and does it cause us to do anything about it do we have the desire to reach out to them to invite them to church to encourage them to think about eternity and where they are going to challenge them about the condition of their soul my friend do we have the heart's desire and prayer for our people that Paul had for his because there are many people in our churches and in our community who have the same problem that the Jews had they have the word of God in their midst all their lives but it has produced in them unbelief and hardness of heart simply simply because they somehow think that they will get to heaven on their own merits of righteousness and that's what Paul says about the Jews in verse 2

I bear them witness they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge for being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own they did not submit to God's righteousness righteousness for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes and so that's the context to verses 9 and 10 that the Jews were blinded by their pride and works of self righteousness and yet the pastor's heart of Paul sought to show the Jews that the only way to be saved is to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead so their context but secondly I'd like us to look at verses 9 and 10 and consider their content their content look again at verse 9 it says 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 for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved and as we're beginning to see already the content of these wonderful verses is built upon the context of the passage because in the immediate context

Paul is contrasting the righteousness which comes from the law with the righteousness that comes by faith and Paul says that in order to be saved we must possess the righteousness which comes by faith in order to be saved we must believe in our heart that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead but this is what breaks Paul's heart and causes him such great concern for his own people because he knows that the Jews have this religious zeal he knows that they're enthusiastic and they possess this religious fervor that wants to ensure that they are right with God but their problem is that they're going about it the completely wrong way because Paul says that their zeal for God is not according to knowledge it's according to ignorance they're ignorant of God's plan of salvation they're ignorant of God's purposes they're ignorant of the righteousness of God which is Jesus Christ and they're so blinded that they are zealously trying to establish their own righteousness they're trying to be right with God on their own terms and their own merits and you know there are many like them there are many religions and many religious people who have a religious zeal but the Bible says it's all done in ignorance and you know we can see why Paul had such a heart for the Jews it wasn't only because he was a Jew himself but it was also because he knew what it was to be blinded by the same self righteousness Paul knew their blindness because he was once there himself and sometimes I think as Christians we can forget what we once were when we were still strangers to grace and to God sometimes we can forget how ignorant and how blinded to the things of

God we were when we were unconverted to the point that we don't have the same compassion and patience and love and care towards those who are still unconverted but let Paul be a lesson to us because he never forgot what it was like when he was without grace in his heart time and time again Paul emphasized in his letters what God did for him and when he took him from his spiritual blindness even in his letter to the philippians when Paul wrote about his pre-conversion days he said to them if anyone thinks that they can have confidence in the flesh I have more I was circumcised on the eighth day he says I was from the stock of Israel I was from the tribe of Benjamin I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews I was a thoroughbred Jew but more than that he says concerning the law

[20 : 39] I was a Pharisee concerning zeal I was persecuting the church I was dragging them out and putting them to death concerning the righteousness which is in the law he says I was blameless I was blameless that was the darkness and the blindness which enveloped the heart and mind of Paul he thought that he was right with God because of who he was and what he did but when he was converted when he became a Christian when he had an encounter with Jesus Christ in the gospel Paul confessed what things were gained to me then these I have counted loss for Christ in fact I count all things loss he says for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but done that I may win Christ and be found in him not having my own righteousness which is from the law but that which is through faith in

Christ and that's what Paul is now teaching to those who are spiritually blinded by their own self righteousness that the righteousness of the law is no righteousness at all because as Paul says in verse 5 that even though Moses said that the law taught said do this and you shall live it's what Moses said it was an impossibility because no one can uphold the law no one can keep the laws of God and attain God's righteousness because if they could then they must be God and so Paul is stressing that the purpose of the law wasn't to become self righteous and to try and earn your way into heaven the purpose of the law was to show us how bankrupt and how fallen and how corrupt we are by our sin that we need a saviour the purpose of the law is to show us that we need to have faith in Jesus Christ we need to have the righteousness which is by faith and that's what Paul says in verse 6 he says in verse 6 of chapter 10 but the righteousness based on faith says do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven or who will descend into the abyss that is to bring Christ up from the dead 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 and these verses Paul he's actually adapting the farewell speech of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 30 that's what's really interesting about it Deuteronomy chapter 30 Moses gives his last will and testament before he died and he told the Jews that the salvation which is offered to them they're standing on the banks of the Jordan just about to go into the promised land and he's saying to them salvation it's right in front of you it's right in front of you and that's what

Paul is saying too that salvation in Jesus Christ it's right in front of you and it's been freely offered to you because what does it say the word is near you in your mouth and in your heart it's been freely offered to you in the preaching of the gospel it's the word of faith we preach he says it's right in front of you it's there for the taking you don't have to search for it you don't have to earn it you don't have to work for it all you have to do is accept it by faith all you have to do is accept it by faith but how do we do that because we know that we can't be saved by our own efforts that's what Paul is telling us we can't be saved by our own good works and our righteousness so how can we be saved well Paul Paul says it's as simple as this it's as simple as this 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 for with the heart one believes and is justified they're made righteous and with the mouth one confesses and is saved now we aren't to make too much of the order of the verses that we're to confess first and then believe because in verse 9 Paul is just repeating exactly what Moses said in Deuteronomy 30 but in verse 10 Paul reverses the order giving to us what we think is the correct sequence but the order isn't what's important believing and confessing is what's important believing and confessing is what's important and Paul says we must believe in our heart that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead because faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead it is fundamental to our salvation my friend the resurrection is what makes the gospel so wonderful and so beautiful that death is not the end the grave will not be our final resting place in this world and sin does not have dominion over us but more than resurrection of

[26 : 21] Jesus Christ assures us that everyone who has faith in this risen saviour is made righteous in God's sight righteous in God's sight everyone who believes in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead receives the righteousness of God which is by faith and this is what Paul was saying even back in chapter 4 he's saying that faith is counted as righteousness he says that's how Abraham was saved faithful Abraham it wasn't his act of righteousness it wasn't his circumcision it wasn't even keeping the law but by faith by faith his faith was accounted to him as righteousness therefore in the same way says Paul Jesus was delivered over to death and raised to life for our justification so that we would be made righteous my friend the resurrection of

Jesus Christ is God's proof that the penalty for our sin has been fully paid and so in order to be saved we must have faith in what Jesus has done for us we must have faith in what Jesus has done for us it was Ari Torrey he was an American evangelist in the 19th and 20th century and in his book he wrote a book called the Bible and it's Christ and Torrey explained in that book what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ and this is what he said when Jesus died he died as my representative and I died in him when Jesus rose he rose as my representative and I rose with him I look at the cross of Christ and I know that atonement has been made for my sins

I look at an open tomb he says and the risen and ascended Lord and I know that the atonement has been accepted there no longer remains a single sin on me no matter how many or how great my sins may have been my sins may have been as high as the heavens he says but in light of the resurrection and the atonement which covers them it's as high as heaven the atonement that covers my sin is as high as heaven my sins he says may have been as deep and as dark as the ocean but in light of the resurrection the atonement swallows them up as deep as eternity my friend that's what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ I died with him and I rose with him he is mine and I am his but

Paul doesn't leave it there because when we look at these verses Paul not only wants us to consider them within their context and he not only wants us to consider their content Paul also wants us to lay hold of the fact that these precious words are full of confidence but their confidence comes when we make a confession their confidence comes when we make a confession so let's look lastly at these verses and their confidence their confidence we'll just read them again 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 for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved so in these verses our confidence in salvation is strengthened when we confess with our mouth that

Jesus is Lord in other words our confidence comes from our confession of our faith because we may have the weakest faith we may have the smallest faith we may have the most tried faith and the most tested faith but our confidence comes from the confession of our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and that he is Lord over my salvation and he is Lord over my life and you know when Paul wrote his letter to the Hebrews he was writing to converted Christians who were being persecuted

because of their faith and they were being so brutally persecuted and hated by other Jews that they were about to give up on the faith they were on the verge of turning back to Judaism but when Paul wrote to these persecuted Christians he encouraged them by saying hold fast to your confession hold fast to your confession because their confession and their confidence came from their faith that is in

[31 : 42] Jesus Christ as Lord when they confessed Jesus Christ is Lord and that's what Paul is telling us here that our confidence in the work of salvation is all because Jesus Christ is Lord in fact throughout this entire letter when you go through it Paul has emphasized and reemphasized that the lordship of Christ is what undergirds our salvation he said in chapter three all have sinned and come short of the glory of God but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord in chapter five Paul stressed that we are justified by faith when we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ then at the end of chapter eight Paul gave to us the assurance and the security of our salvation that there is nothing in life or in death that is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our

Lord and so when we come to these precious verses Paul says that in order to be saved and made righteous in God's sight we must confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord but I want to say that our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord it must be three fold because when we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord we do so first of all because we believe that he is risen we believe he is risen and this is why Paul connects believing in the resurrection with confessing Jesus as Lord because both go together both go hand in hand that when we confess Jesus as Lord we believe that he is risen and this is what Paul reminded the Christians in Philippi when he wrote his letter to the Philippians Paul reminded them that God has highly exalted

Jesus by raising him from the dead and he says he has given to him a name which is above every other name that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess in heaven and on earth and under the earth Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father and so when we confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord we do so because we believe he is risen but we do so secondly because of his redemption if we confess that Jesus is Lord we believe that Jesus has conquered all his and our enemies and he's won the victory for his people if we confess that Jesus as Lord we believe that upon the cross upon which the prince of glory died Jesus redeemed us from our bondage to sin and the power of sin we believe that upon the cross Jesus defeated Satan and the power of evil we believe that upon the cross Jesus destroyed death and the power of death when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord we acknowledge that he has won the victory and that's what Paul said when he wrote to the Corinthians another letter 1 Corinthians 15 Paul wrote about the importance of the resurrection and he said that the resurrection was a confirmation of victory over our enemies of sin Satan and death which is why Paul concluded chapter 15 by saying thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ and so when we confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord we do so because we believe he is risen we do so because we believe in his redemption but we also believe that he is ruler over our life which is the third and in many ways the most outward aspect of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord because when we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord over our life we are confessing that we bow down to him and we give glory to none other than this Jesus we're confessing that there is no other person on the throne of our heart except Jesus Christ and what Paul is referring to is it's lordship salvation that he is lord that we can only be saved when Jesus Christ is lord and he rules over every area of our life where he is lord over our minds and all the decisions that we make in life he's lord over our conduct and our moral standards and the way we live our life as an example to others he is lord over our time which means he's lord over our profession our jobs our careers our ambitions our plans our hopes our dreams he's lord over our home he's lord in our marriage he's lord in our family he's lord with our children he's lord in our relationships he's lord in the aspects of the word that he rules he dictates he tells us how to live our life for his glory he's lord over the church in our congregation in our session meetings in our deacon's court in our

[37 : 29] Sunday school in our youth fellowship in all our fellowship my friends when we confess that Jesus Christ is lord we are confessing that he is lord over all lord over all our life as Paul says later on he is lord of all lord of everything and tonight from these precious words we have the confidence and the assurance that when we believe in our heart that Jesus Christ has risen that he has provided redemption that he is ruler in my life when we confess that he is lord then we will be

saved it's as simple and as clear as that our confidence and our assurance of salvation comes when we confess with our mouth that

Jesus is lord when we confess Jesus is lord he says you will be saved you might not look any different you might not even feel any different yet the promise and the confidence and the assurance it comes when you can confess openly with your mouth that Jesus Christ is your lord and your savior but how how will you know that you're saved how will you have that assurance that you're saved was it not Jesus who said out of the heart the mouth speaks my friend if you believe in Jesus with your heart then you will confess him with your mouth but please whatever you do whatever you do don't let this be another occasion where you hear the beauty and the glory of the gospel and you walk away unmoved by it don't let this be another occasion where you remain hardened and in a state of unbelief because these are precious words precious words and so consider their context consider their content consider their confidence that 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 may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O Lord our gracious God we thank and we praise thee for the beauty and the glory of our gospel help us Lord to delight in it help us to confess it with our mouth to confess that Jesus is Lord over every area of our life to confess that he is the one who is king over our own being help us Lord to submit to him and to live for him bless thy word to us we pray watch over us in the week that lies ahead a week that is unknown to any of us but we give thanks Lord that every day met everything into thy care and into the hand of the father who cares for us for thou art our father and we are the clay and thou art potter that we are the work of thine own hands do us good then we pray go before us for

Jesus sake Amen we shall conclude by singing in Psalm 66 Psalm 66 page 300 Psalm 66 and we're singing from verse 16 down to the end of the psalm here is the psalmist's confession of his faith Psalm 66 on verse 16 all that fear God come here I'll tell what he did for my soul I with my mouth unto him cried my tongue did him extol if in my heart I sin regard the Lord me will not hear but surely God me heard and to my prayer's voice give ear O let the Lord our gracious God forever blessed be who turn not my prayer from him nor yet his grace from me these verses of [42 : 54] O thou fear God come here and I'll tell what he did for my soul I with my mouth unto him cried my tongue did him back stole in my heart I did revive the Lord me will not hear but surely hope me heard unto my fresh voice give hear oh let the

Lord our gracious God forever blessed be who who turned in not my prayer from him nor yet his grace from me the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more amen