

## What do we hope to accomplish?

This pamphlet challenges the misconception among evangelicals that Romans Chapter 10 supports public or private confession of faith as a salvation prerequisite.

## What is the Issue?

A view of salvation that requires confession as a prerequisite to salvation (rather than an on-going element of discipleship) has become popular over the years.

The influence of this error has now increased so that it is common to hear a Gospel presentation with a ‘sinner’s prayer’ (or similar) as a requirement to obtain salvation.

In the vast majority of cases, Romans Chapter 10 is used as a basis for this error by selecting verses outside of their context and without sufficient regard to clear instruction elsewhere in Scripture.

## What is the Gospel?

The Gospel message is simply this:

- You are a sinner, as we all are. Even one sin is sufficient to place you in this category. [Rom. 2:14-15; 3:10-20; 3:23; 5:12; 7:15]
- The penalty for your sin—even one sin—is separation from the sinless glory of God’s presence. [Rom. 6:23a] This means that when you die you do not qualify for Heaven, but are destined to eternal separation from God in a place of torment—Hell. Naturally, if living a sinless life depended on us, we would all go to Hell. However, God, in an act of merciful grace, provided a means by which we could qualify for Heaven. The means provided was Jesus Christ, who

lived a sinless life, willingly gave His life on the cross as a ransom for the sins you have and will commit in your life. [Rom. 3:23-25; 4:24-25; 5:6-10, 15-17; 6:23b]

- To obtain this ransom, God asks only that you believe (have faith in, trust) His offer. [Rom. 4:21]. Scripture states that our role in salvation is based on only one verb—belief. Our belief triggers God’s application of saving grace. [Rom. 1:16; 3:22, 24, 26; 4:3].

## The difference between grace and works

Grace is ‘unmerited favor’ and consists of those blessings bestowed that are not a result of any effort (work) on the part of the recipient.

The greatest of these is salvation, which is bestowed solely based on one’s belief in the Gospel—without any follow-up effort (works) required of us.

The word <sup>1</sup>‘believe’ in the New Testament means: to be persuaded of, place confidence in, or entrust. One may act on belief, but the belief comes first, then the act. So it is with faith (salvation) and works (discipleship).

To require any effort (works) on the part of the believer is equivalent to proclaiming that the shed blood of Jesus Christ was insufficient to fully pay for our sin. It says that we must somehow ‘help’ God make one last payment. This nullifies the concept of grace as unmerited favor. [Rom. 3:27-28; 4:4-8; 5:1,18; 9:32-33; 11:6]

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<sup>1</sup> ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ, pisteuo

## Chapter 10—Witnessing 101

In chapters 1-9, Paul makes clear his mission is the Gospel; why it is needed, how it is obtained, and how it influences our lives. Then comes chapter 10—Paul’s instruction on witnessing—Witnessing 101.

[10:1] The subject is still salvation.

[10:2] Christianity is a balance between love, humility, zeal and doctrinal moxie.

[10:3] Israel’s problem was their failure to recognize that the Law pointed to their need for salvation. They attempted to relate to God by their own works instead of by grace.

[10:4] Christ’s death *should* have put an end to their doctrine of self-righteousness had they been open to the truth. *Notice the emphasis on ‘belief’ (grace).*

[10:5] Sure, you can get to heaven by works, but you would have to be obedient to the *whole* law (fat chance).

[10:6-7] *Again, Paul adds nothing to the salvation prerequisite of faith.* True righteousness is triggered by a single act of faith in God’s provision for sin. True *faith* recognizes the shortcomings of works-based religion. That is, though you may search high and low among the best of philosophies, people, and faiths, you will not find a savior outside of Christ (ref. Deut.30:11-14).

## How Paul witnessed (via expanded paraphrase and commentary). . .

[10:8] *“What does Scripture say? I’ve explained the Gospel. You apparently understand it and can even repeat key concepts back in your own words. It also seems that you believe the Gospel—which I have shared.”*

[10:9] The Greek word translated <sup>2</sup>‘confess’ means ‘to agree with.’ Thus, the verse can be paraphrased and expounded as,

*“If you verbally agree concerning my Lord’s role in your salvation (soon to be your Lord, as well) and actually believe it (as opposed to simply entertaining me in the hope that will quickly withdraw), then comes salvation.”*

[10:10] The Greek word translated <sup>3</sup>‘unto’ means ‘with respect to’ or ‘concerning.’ Paul continues his point from verse 9,

*“Repeating my thoughts aren’t what matters, but believing the Gospel does matter. It is your belief that triggers salvation and your mouth that communicates back to me what has already occurred.”*

Paul says that you trigger salvation by what you believe, but that he (Paul) won’t know what you have believed or that you have believed until you tell him (confesses). This is made clearer by 1 John 4:15. Every believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit which immediately takes up residence in them when they believe (1 Cor.1:22; Eph.1:13). 1 John 4:15 says that a valid confession of Christ comes only after God has *already* sealed them. Thus, indicating that the individual *was already saved* when the confession is made. Otherwise, the confession is the work of the old nature or human spirit (rather than the Holy Spirit), does not honor God, and is meaningless.

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<sup>2</sup> *homologeō*, ὁμολογεῖν: “to say the same thing as another, i.e. to agree with, assent.”

<sup>3</sup> *εἰς*, *eis*: a primary preposition indicating a point *already* reached or entered

[10:11] Recognizing that some will confuse the new believer's response *to Paul* as some form of prerequisite for salvation *by God*, Paul focuses on the act of belief as the point of salvation.

*“The Scriptures say, whosoever believes on Him (Christ) will not be ashamed.”*

That is, the person who believes the Gospel is saved and, because they are not ashamed of what they have believed, will tell you when asked. Thus, Paul explains what he means by verse 10 (and also verse 1:16).

[10:12] You may have heard the expression, “What’s in a name?” Well, if the name is Jesus Christ there is something in the name. The word <sup>4</sup>Jesus literally means, “Jehovah is salvation.” The word <sup>5</sup>Christ means literally, “anointed.” His name, literally, was “God’s anointed savior among us.” It was more than a label; it was a call to faith. The Greek word for <sup>6</sup>“call upon” means to summon, appeal to, entitle, or invoke (see Acts 9:14,21). Calling upon Christ’s name meant to believe on His name, or, that he was who He claimed to be. Thus, prompting God’s act of Grace by accounting your life as covered by Christ’s blood and dispatching the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*“There is no distinction that can be made between the Jewish believers and Gentile believers—the Lord has plenty of salvation to spread around to anyone who invokes Him.”*

[10:13] Anyone—even those who couldn’t speak or write—could still place their faith

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<sup>4</sup> Ἰησοῦς

<sup>5</sup> Χριστός

<sup>6</sup> ἐπικαλέομαι, epikaleomai

in who He claimed to be and become saved by that simple act.

*“Anyone who invokes His name (who is my Lord) shall be saved.”*

[10:14-15] Your salvation is triggered by your belief, which requires someone to share the Gospel—not through their lifestyle, but by explaining what the Gospel means even to those who do not at first seek it.

*“How can salvation be triggered if they haven’t believed? How can they believe if they haven’t heard? How will they hear unless someone witnesses to them. How will the Gospel be proclaimed unless witnesses are sent out among the people. As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that proclaim the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.”*

The next time you hear someone present the Gospel in a way that seems to require some form of confession as a prerequisite to salvation, challenge him or her. Confession as a salvation prerequisite is as bad a heresy as any other work as a prerequisite.

Here is how Paul responded to those that would add an element of works to salvation:

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. [Galatians 1:6-9]*

# What About the Sinner’s Prayer?

The Role of Romans Chapter 10 in  
Presenting the Gospel

## Workman Ministries

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. [2Tim.2:15]*

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