**Sunday, August 1, 2021**

 **“SEEKING CONFIDENCE”**

**Lesson 9:**  Romans 10:5-17; **Time of Action:** 56 A.D.; **Place of Action:** Paul writes to the believers in Rome from Corinth

**Golden Text:** “**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** **(Romans 10:13).**

 **I. INTRODUCTION.** When the power of the gospel is released by the Spirit, it can do what human effort cannot do—change lives forever.  The problem is getting people to listen and by faith trust Jesus Christ for salvation.  People are not saved because of their religious enthusiasm.  They are saved as they respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.  This week’s lesson reminds us of how powerful the gospel message is and that salvation only comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

 **II. THE LESSON BACKGROUND.** In the closing verses of Romans chapter 8, the Apostle Paul wrote about the love of Christ and how believers can never be separated from it (see Romans 8:31-39). Then Paul immediately thought about his own Jewish people who were separated from that love, because they had rejected Jesus Christ.  Paul had once been among the unbelieving Jews, but now he longed to see them saved just like he was.  In Romans 9:1-7, Paul, a Jew himself, expressed his deep personal sorrow over his people’s rejection of the Messiah as he illustrated the distinction between those who were natural born Jews and those who were spiritual Jews (see Romans 9:8-13).  He then defended God’s right to make that distinction by reminding his readers that God’s mercy is under His sovereign will (see Romans 9:14-24).  Paul closes chapter 9 with a message confirming that the prophets had foretold that God would show mercy to the Gentiles receiving them into salvation by faith (see Romans 9:25-33).  Chapter 10 opens with Paul declaring that his “heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (see Romans 10:1).  Then he described the Jews as having a zeal for God but out of ignorance (see Romans 10:2).  Their desire to follow the Law of Moses led them to follow their own righteousness which was against Christ who Paul said was “the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (see Romans 10:3-4).  Our lesson begins with verse 5.

 **III. CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST (Romans 10:5-11)**

**A. Righteousness of the law (Romans 10:5).**This verse says, **“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”**Paul quoted from the Old Testament to prove to his readers that they didn’t even understand their own **“law.”**  He began quoting from Leviticus 18:5 saying, **“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law.”  That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”**  In other words, Moses had described **“the righteousness which is of the law”** by stating the purpose of **“the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”**In other words, if Israel obeyed **“the law,”** they would live by it.  The problem was that even though the Old Testament stressed obedience to God’s **“law,”** no human being was ever able to perfectly obey it.  If someone could attain **“righteousness”** by keeping **“the law,”** it would mean that they had perfect obedience.  But Jesus Christ was the only one who perfectly obeyed **“the law”** of God, so He was qualified to be a sinless sacrifice so that all who believe would “be made the righteousness of God in Him” (see II Corinthians 5:21).

**B. Righteousness by faith (Romans 10:6-7).**

**1. (vs. 6).**This verse says **“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:).”**In contrast to Moses’ words that the one who practices **“righteousness”** by keeping the law shall live (see verse 5), here Paul quoted Moses again (see Deuteronomy 30:12-13) saying, **“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above:).”**In other words, **“the righteousness”** based on **“faith”** which produces a right relationship with God says the following: “Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down.”  Paul gave us the spiritual understanding of Moses’ words.  He was telling his readers that God’s way of salvation was not difficult or complicated.  It’s true that **“Christ”** is in heaven; but we don’t have to go to heaven (as if we could) to find **“Christ”** and bring Him down to help us.  The truth is, Jesus Christ has already come down from heaven to help us.

**2. (vs. 7).**This verse says **“Or, who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)”**Paul continued to make the point that salvation was not difficult or complicated by adding **“Or, who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)”**Just as the sinner does not have to go to heaven to find Jesus Christ, neither would they have to go among **“the dead”** to bring **“Christ”** back to life again.  Just as Jesus has already come down from heaven to save the sinner, He has also risen from **“the dead”** once, so He’s not among **“the dead”** anyway.  Paul’s point once again was that the sinner does not have to perform difficult works in order to be saved.  The gospel message of salvation is that Jesus Christ has already done the necessary work.  No one needs to do anything more; the work is finished (see John 19:30).

**C. The word of faith (Romans 10:8).**This verse says **“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”**Having said what the righteousness that comes from **“faith”** does not say (see verses 6 &7), here Paul asks the question, **“But what saith it?”**or what does the righteousness that comes from **“faith”** really say?  Paul then proceeded to answer the question.  He said, **“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.”**Here, Jesus Christ can be substituted for the term **“word.”**The idea is that no one has to go to heaven or to the world of the dead to find Jesus for salvation because **“The word (or Christ) is nigh thee.”**In other words, Jesus Christ, who is the **“Word”** (see John 1:1, 14) is near us.  Paul went on to say that **“the word”** was **“even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”**   In other words, the gospel of Jesus Christ— **“the Word of faith”**—is available and accessible to everyone.  The very **“Word”** on the lips of the religious Jews was the **“Word of faith.”**  The very law that they read and recited pointed to Jesus Christ.

**D. Confess with the mouth (Romans 10:9-10).**

**1. (vs. 9).**This verse says, **“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.”**Here, Paul said that two things are required as conditions of salvation.  First, he said **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus.”**To “**confess…the LORD Jesus”** means that we openly profess a relation to Him and dependence on Him as our **“LORD”** and Saviour, owning Christianity in the face of all the allurements and troubles of this world, and standing by Him through all circumstances.  But we should not confuse confessing **“the LORD Jesus”**with confessing our sins which could be rightly understood as part of repentance (see Matthew 3:1, 6; Acts 19:18).  Even though Paul didn’t mention repentance here does not mean that turning from sin in genuine, heartfelt repentance is not necessary (see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30).  The fact that confessing our faith in Jesus Christ is necessary is seen in Jesus’ words: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (see Matthew 10:32-33).  But simply stating that we believe in Jesus is not enough unless we truly **“believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead.”**Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not optional; it is the essential core doctrine of the Christian faith (see I Corinthians 15:1-4, 13-14).  The **“heart”** represents the inner person where faith exists.  The **“mouth”** must then express what is in the **“heart.”**The last part of this verse confirms that confession and belief result in salvation, for **“thou shalt be saved”**or delivered from the power of sin (see Romans 6:14; 8:2), from the penalty of sin (see Romans 5:9; I Thessalonians 1:10), and one day from the very presence of sin (see Romans 8:18-23; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; I John 3:2).

**2. (vs. 10).**This verse says, **“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**Notice that in the previous verse, the order was **“confession”** and then believing. But here Paul reverses the order because there must first be faith or belief in **“the heart”** before there can be an acceptable **“confession”** with the mouth.  Concerning faith, Paul said **“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”** This implies more than accepting the fact that a man named Jesus lived on earth and did some amazing things.  A person may even believe that Jesus was deity.  But they have not accepted Him as their personal Saviour and committed their lives to Him.  This is confirmed in John 12:42-43 where it says, “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”  It’s not believing if it’s not with **“the heart”** or heart-belief—being convinced in one’s mind.  In the last part of this verse, Paul said **“and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**The point of this verse is that believing leads to **“righteousness,”** that is, a right relationship with God and confessing Jesus Christ leads to **“salvation,”** that is, a deliverance from sin.

**E. Believers are not ashamed (Romans 10:11).**This verse says, **“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”**In verse 10 which is not part of our printed text, Paul declared that believing in Jesus Christ in the heart (or mind) and confessing Him with our mouths are necessary to receive justification (“being found not guilty”), and salvation.  He continues in this verse by quoting the last part of Isaiah 28:16 when he said, **“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”**It appears that Paul was quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.  Most English translations of the last part of Isaiah 28:16 say, “he that believeth shall not make haste.”  In Hebrew, the words “make haste” can mean “running away in panic or distress;” but in the Septuagint “make haste” is translated as **“ashamed”**and means **“disappointed.”**So here the quote means that whoever believes in Jesus Christ **“will not be ashamed”** or disappointed.  Paul’s point was that since the LORD always keeps His promises to His people, we can be confident that the promise of salvation is secure for those who come to Christ and confess Him as LORD.

 **IV. CALLING ON THE LORD (Romans 10:12-13)**

**A. The LORD does not discriminate (Romans 10:12).**This verse says, **“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.”**In verse 11 Paul used a passage from Isaiah to show that “whosoever believes” in Jesus Christ will be saved.  So, in the first half of this verse he explains what he meant by “whosoever” in verse 11 by stating **“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.”**In other words, the term “whosoever” means that there are no distinctions or differences between **“Jews”** and **“Greeks”** (Gentiles or non-Jews) who are in Christ Jesus (see Galatians 3:28).  This type of teaching was difficult for Jews to accept.  They believed that they were the only ones who received divine revelation, and were distinctly different as God’s covenant people, from the idolatrous Gentile nations.  Even though Paul agreed that the Jews were a special people (see Romans 3:1-2; 9:4-5), he also recognized that there was no difference between Jews and Gentles in the sense that all are sinners (see Romans 3:23), and that “whosoever believeth on him” (see Romans 10:11) would be saved (see verse 13).  Then Paul explained why there is no difference between **“Jews”** and **“Greeks”** (or Gentiles).  He said, **“for the same LORD over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”**Of course, the term **“LORD”** here refers to Jesus Christ (see Acts 10:36; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:9-11).  So, this phrase simply means that Jesus Christ is the **“same LORD”** of both **“the Jew and the Greek”** and He grants His **“rich”** blessings, His grace and mercy, upon everyone who will **“call upon him.”**The fact of the matter is that there is not one God for **“the Jew”** and another God for **“the Gentile”**or non-Jew.

**B. All are welcome to call on the LORD (Romans 10:13).**This verse says, **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.”**Here, Paul again quoted the Old Testament to confirm the worldwide scope of salvation.  This time he cited Joel 2:32 saying **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.”**Again, Paul quoted from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where the word “delivered” appears instead of **“saved.”**Joel’s prophetic text relates to the tribulation period (see Joel 2:30-32), for during that time, the LORD will **“save”** those who **“call”** on His **“name.”**  Paul applied Joel’s text to all those who trust in the risen Christ during the church age, the period we are living in now.  Joel’s prophetic text (see Joel 2:28-32) was also used by Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:16-21) which resulted in three thousand converts being baptized in a single day (see Acts 2:41).  The term **“whosoever”**in this verse, tells us that the invitation to come to Jesus Christ is open to everyone.  Since no one is beyond the reach of God’s love and grace (see John 6:37; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17), we have been commanded to take the gospel to all nations (see Matthew 28:19-20).

 **V. CONFIDENT PREACHING (Romans 10:14-17)**

**A. A question of believing (Romans 10:14).**This verse says, **“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?”**Since only those who call on the LORD can be saved (see verse 13), Paul logically asked a series of questions.  In Romans chapters 9 and 10, the Apostle Paul’s message is focused on Israel and his desire for them to be saved (see Romans 9:1-3; 10:1).  So, even though his questions apply to all sinners, the first application is to the nation of Israel or Jews.  First, he asked, **“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?”**People cannot **“call”** on a God **“they have not believed in.”**  The only way unbelieving Jews can be saved is by calling on the LORD just like any other sinner.  But before they can **“call on Him,”** they must **“believe.”**  For the Jew, this meant believing that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was truly the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel.  It also meant believing in His death and resurrection (see Romans 10:9-10).  So, this first question implies that Israel didn’t exercise faith or belief in order to **“call”** on the name of the LORD.  The second question was **“and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”**This indicates that in order to **“believe in Him,”** sinners must hear the Word, because it’s the Word that creates faith in the heart of the hearer (see Romans 10:17).  The truth is that people don’t hear the gospel because they don’t want to hear it.  In the Bible, Israel is described as having “heavy” (see Isaiah 6:10), or dull ears (see Hebrews 5:11).  The third question Paul asked was **“and how shall they hear without a preacher?”**  This question expresses the fact that there cannot be hearing without a message or proclamation, so a **“preacher”** or “one who proclaims” is needed.  Paul believed that humans were necessary instruments in evangelical work.  The logic of Paul’s questions is easily seen when we put those questions in the form of statements.  It would be something like this: “Before people can pray to the LORD for help, they must believe in Him. And before they can believe in the LORD, they must hear about Him. And for anyone to hear about the LORD, someone must tell them.”

**B. A question of preaching (Romans 10:15).**This verse says, **“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!”**Paul continues here with his fourth question asking, **“And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”**In other words, a messenger of the Word must **“be sent,”** and it is the LORD who does the sending.  This refers to the divine commissioning of the messenger or the one **“sent.”**It’s possible that at this point, Paul may have been remembering his own call to preach the Word to the Gentiles (see Acts 13:1-3).  Just like true prophets spoke God’s message when they were **“sent”** by Him, in the same way the gospel messengers speak Jesus’ message.  Then quoting from Isaiah 52:7, Paul reminded his readers of **“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!”  Note:  This quotation is also found in Nahum 1:15. The text in Nahum had to do with the destruction of the Assyrian Empire, the hated enemies of the Jews.  Nineveh was their key city, a wicked city to which God had sent Jonah some 150 years before Nahum wrote.  God had patiently dealt with Nineveh, but now His judgment was going to fall.  It was this “glad tidings of good things” that Nahum, God’s messenger brought to the Jews, and this is what made his “feet” so “beautiful.”  Isaiah used this statement for a future event—the return of Christ and the establishing of His glorious kingdom (see Isaiah 52:7-10).  The messenger in Isaiah’s text with the “beautiful feet” announces that God has defeated Israel’s enemies and that Messiah was reigning from Jerusalem.  But Paul used this quotation in a more present application describing the messengers of “the gospel of peace” as taking the “glad tidings of good things” or the good news to Israel today.**  The **“peace”** spoken of here is two-fold: **“peace with God”** (see Romans 5:1) and the **“peace”** Christ has brought about between Jews and Gentiles by forming one body, the church (see Ephesians 2:13-17).  The cure for Israel’s rejection of Jesus Christ is hearing the Word of **“the gospel”** and believing in Him.  Whether we believe it or not, there is not a more welcome sight than seeing those who come to us with the **“gospel,”** or the “good news,” for they bring a message of **“peace.”**  Through Jesus Christ we can be at **“peace”** with God and one another.  If the truth be told, what the world needs are fewer high-level **“peace”** negotiators and more true preachers of the **“gospel of peace.”**   When this **“gospel”** is preached, the preacher or messenger is bringing **“glad tidings of good things!”**  The **“good things”** refer to every blessing that comes from being saved.

**C. A question of hearing (Romans 10:16-17).**

**1. (vs. 16).** This verse says **“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, LORD, who hath believed our report?”**The name **“Esaias”**is the Greek form of Isaiah.Just because a person hears **“the gospel”** is no guarantee that it will be accepted or **“obeyed.”**So, still referring to Israel, Paul said **“But they have not all obeyed the gospel.”**The Greek word translated **“obeyed”** comes from a verb meaning “to hear.”  It has the idea of listening to, answering, and submitting oneself to what is heard.  Unsaved Israel did none of those things.  Paul saw this firsthand among the Jews in the cities he attempted to evangelize.  Upon entering a city, the very first place Paul looked for was the Jewish synagogue, where he preached the gospel (see Acts 13:14; 117:2; 18:4).  But very often the Jews rejected the message causing Paul to turn and preach to the Gentiles (see Acts 13:46-48).  To prove that **“they (Jews) have not all obeyed the gospel,”**Paul quoted from Isaiah 53:1 saying, **“For Esaias saith, LORD, who hath believed our report?”  Note: “Isaiah 53:1 introduces one of the greatest messianic chapters in the Old Testament.  Traditionally, orthodox Jewish scholars have applied Isaiah 53 to the nation of Israel instead of to the Messiah, but many ancient rabbis understood it to be a picture of a suffering Messiah bearing the sins of His people.  It was this very chapter Isaiah 53 that led the Ethiopian eunuch to obey the gospel (see Acts 8:26-46).  In Isaiah’s day, many Jews did not believe God’s Word, nor do they believe it today.  John 12:37-41 refers to Isaiah 53:1 to explain how Israel saw Christ’s miracles and still refused to believe.  And because they would not believe, judgment came on them and they could not believe.  The fact that orthodox Jews don’t read Isaiah 53 in their synagogues reveals much of why they don’t believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.  There may be many reasons why Isaiah 53 is not read, but one reason stands out and is offered by Paul who was a Jew.  He writes that “blindness in part has happened to Israel” (see Romans 11:25) and the result is that “a veil lies over their heart” when they read the Old Testament (see II Corinthians 3:15).  Jewish synagogues follow a yearly reading schedule through much of the Old Testament.  There are designated readings for each Sabbath as well as special readings on holy days.  Every Sabbath includes a “parshah”*—*a reading from the Torah, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis-Deuteronomy, which they read completely through every year) —followed by a reading from the Prophets, called the “haftarah.”  The same schedule is followed every year and has been for centuries.  If one looks up the yearly synagogue reading schedule (see https://www.jewfaq.org/readings.htm#Weekly) you will find that Isaiah 53 is never, ever read at all; not in the weekly Sabbath readings or on any special holy day. This may cause one to reason that since the Old Testament is pretty long, all of it can’t be read just during Sabbath synagogue readings and holy days.  One may also reason that there has to be many other passages that are not read as well.  If you thought this, you’d be correct, for there are many other passages that are left out.  But not reading Isaiah 53 makes one really wonder, why?  Although Isaiah 53 is considered to be a unit itself, from a structural and literary viewpoint, the passage actually starts in Isaiah 52:13 and runs to Isaiah 53:12.  But why is that important?  Well, every year around September, one of the scheduled Sabbath readings is Isaiah 51:12-52:12.  But notice that this reading stops at Isaiah 52:12.  One would logically think that on the next Sabbath, the “haftarah” or “reading from the prophets” would begin with Isaiah 52:13 and continue through Isaiah 53.  But that’s not the case, for the next reading skips Isaiah 53 and continues with Isaiah 54:1-10.  That might seem like a coincidence, if it wasn’t for the fact that during a seven-week period, the Sabbath “haftarah”  or “readings from the prophets” cover Isaiah chapters 49, 50, 51, 52 (up to 52:12), 54, 55, and 56.  Notice that Isaiah 53 is missing from this seven-week schedule.  It’s hard not to believe that Isaiah 53 has been purposely removed from any regular, public, Jewish reading of it. The point is that Jews can’t see Jesus in Isaiah 53 because they aren’t looking at it. It goes back to what Paul said in Romans 11:25: “blindness in part has happened to Israel” and in II Corinthians 3:15: “a veil lies over their heart” (jewfaq.org).  Orthodox Jews don’t believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah so they spend very little time if any at all with Isaiah 53.  This is because Christians believe that Isaiah 53 describes the Suffering Servant who we believe to be Jesus Christ, but orthodox Jews believe it describes Israel and their sufferings.**

**2. (vs. 17).**Our final verse says, **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**The words **“So then”**indicate a continuance of Paul’s argument in the last part of verse 14 where he asked the question, “and how shall they hear without a preacher?”  Here he answers that question saying, **“So then faith cometh by hearing.”**The lack of **“hearing”** was one of the Jews’ failures.  For people to come to faith in Jesus Christ, they have to hear the message that produces faith.  This message is found in the gospel, or as Paul said here **“the word of God.”**  For us, **“the Word of God”** is the entire Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit and profitable for spiritual growth (see II Timothy 3:16).  If we want a stronger, deeper faith, it will only come as we hear, read, and study God’s Word regularly.  **“The Word of God,”** hearing, and faith are fundamentals of evangelism and salvation, and they always will be.  Saving power is not in our programs or in our cleverness, but in God.

 **VI. Conclusion.** This week’s lesson has reminded us that the gospel of Jesus Christ, when presented, is the only thing that can lead to salvation. Therefore, as believers in the gospel message, we are commanded to share it with everyone regardless of race, color, creed, or nationality.  This is because Jesus is not only the LORD of saved folk, but He’s also the LORD of sinners.  That makes Him the LORD of all and as such, we must spread His gospel to all.