

Romans 10:5-15

Jesus is Lord of All

Main idea: Jesus really is Lord of all.

How would the world look if you were in charge?

If you could tell people how to live, and they actually listened to you, would the world be more like heaven, or more like hell?

Wouldn't this world be awesome if you could be in charge?

If I were in charge, I would immediately declare that every food establishment in the world must always have pizza rolls and ice cream available at no charge, because I love pizza rolls and ice cream. If I could go to any restaurant and receive free pizza rolls and ice cream, that sounds like heaven. But I think I would come to see from my ever increasing waistline that it's really more like hell.

Now, that's a silly example. But what would you change? Would you force everyone to be kind to one another? Would you force everyone to go to church and live according to the Bible? And if you did, would there be unexpected and undesirable consequences that you didn't foresee?

But what I'm really asking is this: do you live as if you know more than God?

I talked a bit last week about how it's okay and even good to have questions. We like to have every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed, but sometimes, and actually all of the time, it's good to have a reverent awe of God because of these kinds of huge questions. Sometimes we need to be content not knowing. And sometimes, even all the time, not knowing something should actually increase our admiration of God. Because, you see, anything that we don't know, we can be sure that God does know, and the depths of God's wisdom and grace are truly inexhaustible.

So what I'm saying is that the questions that we often think are unanswerable actually do have answers. Most of the important, huge questions we have are perfectly answerable, even if we don't always like the answers.

For example, it's clear that we all often think that we know the answers to how this world should look. So we tell each other how to live, and who to vote for, and even how ice cream cones ought to be made. And often our opinions conflict with one another. And certainly the Bible tells us a lot about all kinds of things, and it's good to encourage the world to read and obey the Bible, but I wonder how often we become legalistic Pharisees about these things, rather than pointing people to rest in Jesus and be transformed by Him.

So I hope that our Scripture this morning will help you to believe the gospel, and preach the gospel to all the world.

Turn with me to Romans 10:5-15. And please stand with me for the reading of God's word.

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "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); because, 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. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 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? 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!” (Romans 10:5-15)

The word of God for the people of God. *Thanks be to God.*

What do you believe about salvation? How does a person get saved? This ought to be a very non-controversial question among Christians, but there are actually several viewpoints that various denominations disagree about, and they’re all based on Scripture.

For example, our Scripture today says that you have to “believe in your heart” and “confess with your mouth,” for “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

But Acts 16:31 just says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” So which is it? Do we need to believe and confess, as it says in Romans 10, or just believe, as it says in Acts 16?

And in Acts 2, when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, after he finished preaching, the people asked him, “What shall we do?” And Peter responded, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”¹

So do we need to believe and confess, or just believe, or do we need to repent and be baptized? Or is it something else entirely?

Well, I actually think the answer is incredibly obvious. The answer is the gospel. But if you’re already committed to believing something else, you’ll miss it.

For example, Romans 10:5 says:

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. (Romans 10:5)

Do you ever think that you can become righteous by obeying laws?

I think a lot of Christians today, even though they claim to believe in grace, tend to live like they believe in the law. In the Old Testament law, specifically Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and Moses taught the Israelites many of the implications of living by the Ten Commandments. And even Christians today hold up the Ten Commandments as the standard for right and wrong, and rightly so. But while the Ten Commandments and all of the Old Testament law are important, they aren’t how we receive salvation. They’re what prove to us that we need salvation.

¹ Acts 2:38

Toward the end of the book of Deuteronomy, after all of the law had been given and explained through Moses, we read this in chapter 28:1-2. It says:

If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God.
(Deuteronomy 28:1-2)

And we think, “We can do this!” I can obey God! I can earn His blessing! But then we also read this in verse 15:

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.
(Deuteronomy 28:15)

And if you continue to read the Old Testament, you find that the Israelites didn’t fall under the first category of obedience, but under the second category of disobedience. And if we’re honest, and humble, we’ll find that the same thing is true of us. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.²

President John F. Kennedy gave a speech on June 26, 1963 in West Berlin with the intention of boosting the morale of the citizens of Berlin during the Cold War. According to many newspapers, he wanted the people of West Berlin to know that he stood with them. He wanted to encourage them. So although he didn’t speak German, he learned to say one phrase in German, “Ich bin Berliner,” which means, “I am a Berliner.” But instead, during his speech, three times he said, “Ich bin ein Berliner,” which means, “I am a jelly doughnut!”

Now, the ironic thing is that the newspapers were actually the ones who messed up. It was fake news. According to Germans, while his accent was off, President Kennedy actually said the correct words, and did not say, “I am a jelly doughnut.”³

So often in life, we mess things up. Over and over again, we find that when we try to take charge of our lives, or this world, we’ll just mess them up. In fact, we have. All the sins that we see in this world, our sins, others’ sins, all of them, are all because we think that we can take charge of our own lives.

But we can’t be made righteous, and we can’t make our world righteous through obeying the law, but through faith. Romans 10, beginning in verse 6.

But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “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); because, 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. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” (Romans 10:6-11)

² Romans 3:23

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ich_bin_ein_Berliner

I'm sure you already know this, but we are not God's boss. We don't pull the strings when it comes to what God does, and we don't even pull the strings when it comes to our salvation. We're not in charge.

We can't go up to heaven to tell God what to do, and we can't go down to hell to save the Savior. We simply need to rely on what God has done, so we believe and confess it.

We usually take this to mean that we need to do something. We need to confess and believe. And we do. We need to believe the word and confess the word, that Jesus is Lord. But notice where the word IS according to verse 8.

The word is near you... (Romans 10:8a)

The word is near you. In other words, God isn't hiding a million miles from anyone, and He's not trying to keep people out. He's ready to save everyone who calls on His name. The word is near you.

And check out just how near it is. Continue reading verse 8.

The word near you, [it is] in your mouth and in your heart. (Romans 10:8)

Notice that it doesn't say that the word "might be" or "could be" in your mouth and heart, but IS. It's like the confession that Jesus is Lord is ready to just burst out of the mouths and hearts of every unbelieving person.

The verse is actually a quotation from the law. Deuteronomy 30:14 says:

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. (Deuteronomy 30:14)

So there is something that we need to do. But it's God's very word that's near us, and in us, and enables us to do it. So we can't take credit for it.

So make no mistake: we must believe. But even believing comes from God. Ephesians 2:8-9.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

You see, salvation is completely a gift from God.

Theologian George W. Knight III wrote:

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award--yet receives such a gift anyway--that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.

And God offers this gift to all. Romans 10:12.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:12-13)

What it’s saying is that God doesn’t show favoritism. He doesn’t love some people more than other people. There’s no distinction. The gospel is for all people.

For some, God gives them faith very early in their lives, even as little children. For others, they don’t begin to believe until much later, as with the thief on the cross, who came to faith in Jesus just before he died. Others come at various other times. But whenever you come to faith, the Bible is clear that this is evidenced in your life by you calling on the name of the Lord.

Do you call Jesus your Lord? Do you seek to obey Him? I’m not asking if you’re perfect at it. None of us are. But do you really look to Jesus as your God, your Master, your Lord? And, having Him as your Lord, do you strive to do what He tells you to do?

Verse 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? 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!” (Romans 10:14-15)

Jesus told us all to preach the gospel. And we should. It’s good news.

So, what do you need to do? Believe? Believe and confess? Repent and be baptized? Yes. All of these are in the Bible, so all of these are biblical and true. And we should desire to do all of them, and more, like even preaching the gospel, because we’ve all been sent to preach the gospel. But I also think that as long as we’re exclusively focused on what we need to do, we’re asking the wrong question.

When they asked Peter on the day of Pentecost, “What shall we do,” it was in response to Peter preaching to them the gospel. The gospel is that you can’t save yourself, so Jesus died to save you. The gospel is that you don’t have to do anything! Jesus did it all.

And when we rest in the truth that Jesus saves us by grace, then we will desire to rejoice in Him through works.

Jesus is Lord. That means God is in charge. And one of the most fundamental things that Christians ought to rejoice in is that we are not in charge! We confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord.

Rest in that truth. Rest in the truth that Jesus has done everything necessary for your salvation. And begin to rejoice.