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Sermon Notes

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Saving Faith

Romans 10:9-10

Introduction

Washington D.C., Arlington National Cemetery; saw the exquisite skill of the Marine Precision drill team... their every move was polished with countless hours of practice; their spirit imbued with the memory of a legacy of countless marine drill teams before them; they stood in a line and executed a series of maneuvers with their rifles, the timing was astounding, almost perfect, like dominoes they clattered up and down the line with each move... we were all truly impressed

After it was over, the drill team got on a special bus which had a huge picture advertisement for the Marines... it showed the shiny, polished sword awarded to Marine officers, held by a hand with a pristine white glove; the sleeve of the arm that held the sword was the sleeve of a Marine officer, but you couldn't see the man, just the sleeved arm, the white-gloved hand, and the spectacular polished sword...

Above the huge picture of the sword on the side of the Marine bus were these simple words: "EARNED. NEVER GIVEN."

I asked a decorated Marine officer who had one of these swords what those words meant: "EARNED. NEVER GIVEN." He said that every officer who won a sword like that had to achieve a number of accomplishments to earn that sword. There were no honorary swords given... they could only be earned by the astounding achievements of "The Few. The Proud. The Marines."

My mind went to a recent recruitment commercial I saw for the Marines, in which a strong young man climbed a vertical rock pillar out in the southwestern desert, almost falling from its face a few times before, by sheer skill and determination, he conquered all challenges and pulled himself up. He was then clad immediately in the dress uniform of the Marines and awarded that same sword. The sword that is "EARNED. NEVER GIVEN."

It made me realize the incredible wisdom of God in the humility and simplicity of saving faith. In the gospel God proclaims the exact opposite message: "GIVEN. NEVER EARNED."

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 4:3-5 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵ However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

As it says in our passage:

Romans 10:8-10 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Context: Paul is dealing with the issue of why the Jews are almost universally rejecting Christ... In Romans 9, Paul's answer is that the matter ultimately rests with God... with sovereign election, with God's power and will

But here in Romans 10, he looks at it from the human perspective: The Jews were too zealous to earn their salvation by their personal merits, their personal achievements, their keeping of the Law of Moses... like the Marine trying to win his sword through personal will, effort, achievement, they wanted a salvation that was "EARNED. NEVER GIVEN."

Romans 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

But here in Romans 10:9-10, Paul speaks of a simple salvation... the simplicity of saving faith, of simply believing and receiving, not of achieving

Romans 10:9-10 thus is a penetrating look on the nature and fruits of saving faith

- The Content of Saving Faith: The Mental Aspect
- The Character of Saving Faith: The Heart Aspect
- The Confirmation of Saving Faith: The Life Aspect

I. The Content of Saving Faith

A. Faith Must Have a Content

1. Faith Alone is Not Enough

- a. Few American Christians can match the faith and fanatical devotion of extremist Muslims who are willing to die for their faith

- b. Few American Christians can match the faith of Buddhist monks who sit for hours and chant and fast and meditate and train their bodies and minds for enlightenment
- c. Faith itself does not save anybody... faith is the human capacity to trust, to venture forth on unseen realities and put their whole lives on the line based on those realities
- d. BUT faith must have an object... it must have a focus, a resting place

Illus. William L. Shirer, covering the Nazi Rally in Nuremberg in September of 1934, he was astonished by the rabid fanaticism of the German people toward Hitler. This is what he wrote that night:

ABOUT TEN O’CLOCK TONIGHT I GOT CAUGHT IN A MOB OF TEN THOUSAND HYSTERIC WHO JAMMED THE MOAT IN FRONT OF HITLER’S HOTEL, SHOUTING: “WE WANT OUR FUHRER.” I WAS A LITTLE SHOCKED AT THE FACES, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE WOMEN, WHEN HITLER FINALLY APPEARED ON THE BALCONY FOR A MOMENT. THEY REMINDED ME OF THE CRAZED EXPRESSIONS I SAW ONCE IN THE BACK COUNTRY OF LOUISIANA ON THE FACES OF SOME HOLY ROLLERS WHO WERE ABOUT TO HIT THE TRAIL. THEY LOOKED UP AT HIM AS IF HE WERE A MESSIAH, THEIR FACES TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING POSITIVELY INHUMAN. IF HE HAD REMAINED IN SIGHT FOR MORE THAN A FEW MOMENTS, I THINK MANY OF THE WOMEN WOULD HAVE SWOONED FROM EXCITEMENT.

The German people were willing to follow this man anywhere, both to slaughter and to be slaughtered in his name...

But that astonishing faith was obviously misplaced

- e. There is a faith that justifies... it has a doctrinal content; it espouses certain truths to be true; it rests on the Person and work of Jesus Christ
2. There is Absolute Truth
- a. Post-Modern man is relativistic... believing there are no moral, religious absolutes
 - b. Post-modernism teaches that truth is subjective, that there actually can be something that is ultimately true for me, but not for you
 - c. The postmodern will tell you “Christ rose from the dead” is a fact that is true for you, but not for me
 - d. The postmodern believes that religion exists only to meet psychological and social needs

- e. Romans 10:9-10 shows us that truth is absolute, not relative, and that only by believing some absolute truths can we be saved
- f. Our culture will call us arrogant, as though we were preaching ourselves as saviors!
- g. Our culture will call us narrow-minded, because we refuse to celebrate other people's version of spiritual truth
- h. Our culture will call us bigoted, because we call anything that contradicts our Christian faith a lie from the devil

Christians these days seem intimidated and embarrassed to make these claims of absolute truth... but absolute truth is the unshakable foundation of our salvation

G.K. Chesterton: "Humility is becoming misplaced. It no longer pertains to self-opinion, where it ought to be. Rather, it now pertains to truth, where it ought not to be." [cited in D.A. Carson's "Telling the Truth," p. 123] Christians should not apologize that the Grand Canyon is majestic, neither should they be embarrassed to declare that a sunset is spectacular. Why, then, should we be embarrassed to make absolute claims about Christ?

- i. Romans 10:9-10 says these truths are eternal:

"Christ is Lord, God raised Him from the dead."

3. Truth Precedes Experience

- a. "No one can argue with your testimony"
- b. Yes, but... cults and false religions have experiences too
 - i) Many new Buddhists in trendy West Coast places will be happy to tell you what Zen meditation has meant for them, how it has brought peace and order to their lives
 - ii) Tom Cruise and others will gladly tell you what the weird cult Scientology has done for his life, how it has shaped everything he does everyday
 - iii) Hindus in India have reached certain astonishing planes of consciousness in which they had what they believed were out of body experiences
 - iv) BUT WHAT IS THE TRUTH??
- c. How do we respond to secular psychologists who say all religious experience is essentially the same?

- i) Atheistic scoffers lump all of these religious experiences in the same bag and make little or no distinction between them
 - ii) Furthermore, some psychiatrists make a special and technical study of religious experiences and are able to explain it all psychologically and in the biochemistry of the brain
- d. Christianity is based on certain facts, and if those facts are not true, Christianity falls

1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

B. Content Clearly Stated

Romans 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

1. Christian faith focuses on the Person of Jesus of Nazareth
2. Who He was, what He accomplished, what He said and did is EVERYTHING for a Christian
3. Christianity is more closely tied to Christ than any other religion is to its founder
 - a. Islam could stand without Muhammad... he was merely the prophet of Allah
 - b. Buddhism could stand without Siddhartha Gautama, the original "Enlightened One," the Buddha... he merely discovered the way to personal enlightenment, and that way would stand whether or not he ever lived
 - c. Christianity, however, is totally tied to this historical personage, Jesus of Nazareth

C. The Doctrine of the Incarnation and Full Deity of Christ

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord"

1. Start with the doctrine of the Incarnation
 - a. Jesus of Nazareth was a real man
 - b. He was really born, He really lived, He really died... He had a body, a face, hands, feet... He ate, slept, walked, spoke, prayed

- c. He breathed, and wept, and bled just like any other man
 - d. “Jesus of Nazareth” is the uncontroversial, politically correct title that secular society uses (omitting the name “Christ,” the “Anointed One”, the “King of the Jews” predicted by the prophets... the Jews acknowledge that there will be a Christ—they just deny that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ
 - e. A Christian is making a positive statement, a confession about the human being, the Jewish man named Jesus: He is Lord
2. The Title “Lord” is a clear claim to full deity
- a. The Old Testament: the Central name for God was “Yahweh”... the name “Yahweh” is the best guess of modern scholars for the way the pronounce the mysterious four-letter name of God used over 6000 times in the Hebrew Bible
 - b. Because of the Ten Commandment’s clear prohibition on taking the name of the Lord in vain, pious Jews decided they would never pronounce the name “Yahweh”... instead they wrote the vowels for the Hebrew word “Adonai” or “Lord” around the Four-Letter name for God
 - c. The Greek Old Testament : 6156 times the word “kurios” (“Lord”) is used by the Greek translators of the OT to represent the Four-letter name of God
 - d. To Greek-speaking Jews, the name “kurios” was God’s name, and no other
3. “Jesus is Lord” the central article of confession of the Christian religion
- a. Christians are basically saying “Jesus is Jehovah” or “Jesus is Yahweh”
 - b. Jesus of Nazareth, the human being, is actually God in the flesh
 - c. It was for the purpose of helping people make this central confession that John wrote his magnificent Gospel

John 20:26 -31 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

That is John's version of this confession: "Jesus is Lord"

He is fully man and fully God... He is God in the flesh, come down to earth to save us from our sins

He is no mere man:

4. Doctrine taught again and again in the New Testament

Colossians 1:16-19 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

5. Jesus is Lord = statement of absolute sovereignty... Jesus rules over all things

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Ephesians 1:21-23 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

6. Our Personal Lord

- a. A Christian making this confession, however, is going beyond a mere doctrinal assertion
- b. A Christian is saying something profoundly personal: "Jesus is MY Lord!!"
Jesus is MY God!!"

- c. Like Thomas, kneeling in front of Jesus in wonder and amazement at the glory of the resurrected Christ, testifying for all to hear:

"My Lord and my God!"

- d. Jesus is not the Savior of anyone for whom He is not the Lord!!
- e. A Christian has put down his weapons of rebellion (sin) and is gladly bowing his neck submissively under Christ's kingly yoke

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- f. A Christian who makes this confession is saying, "I will obey Christ's commands in every area of my life."
- g. There is no area of life off limits to the sovereign rule of Christ, and a Christian is delighted about that
- i) Jesus is Lord of my private thoughts
 - ii) Jesus is Lord of my dreams and aspirations
 - iii) Jesus is Lord of my time: my minutes, my hours, my days
 - iv) Jesus is Lord of my money: what I earn, what I spend, what I save, what I give away
 - v) Jesus is Lord of my marriage, Lord of my household, Lord of all my relationships
 - vi) Jesus is Lord, and has the right to assess and judge my stewardship in every area of my life
 - vii) Jesus is Lord, so His commandments rule my life... if I disobey Him, I am convicted and confess it at sin
 - viii) He is my king, my ruler, my sovereign, my God
 - ix) He has the right to tell me to go overseas as a missionary, He has the right to tell me what job to take, what books to read or not, what movies to see or not to see, He has the right to tell me to do this or don't do that
 - x) A Christian knows all this and is DELIGHTED about it... a Christian is glad that Jesus is Lord... for His yoke is easy and His burden light!

D. The Bodily Resurrection of Christ

1. A Christian also confesses that Jesus of Nazareth both died and was raised to life
2. Doctrinal content is essential: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again
3. Not merely that the spirit of Jesus lives in us all... like the spirit of Christmas in the hearts of mankind
4. No... Jesus actually rose physically and bodily from the grave

Romans 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

5. Prior to that, we testify that Christ died for sins... an atoning sacrifice for us
6. This is essential to saving faith, and not something additional that can be learned in advanced discipleship classes

E. Evangelism Essential: You Cannot Call on Someone You Don't Know

1. Content is essential to saving faith
2. Paul proves that here, in verses 9 & 10
3. Paul states it openly in the verses that follow

Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

4. Therefore, evangelists MUST tell good news about Christ, or no one can be saved
 - a. As we've said, sharing our personal experiences will not save anyone
 - b. Your personal testimony is helpful but not essential
 - c. Content about Christ is essential
 - i) You must tell them that the God who created the world and everything in it has laws by which we are to live

- ii) You must tell them that all of us have disobeyed those laws and that we deserve eternal death in hell as a result
 - iii) You must tell them that this Creator sent His only begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth, into the world as the only hope of salvation
 - iv) You must tell them that this Jesus lived a normal human life in all physical respects... He was born, breathed air, ate food, slept when tired, walked, talked, worked, laughed and cried
 - v) You must also tell them that this same Jesus was LORD, He was God the Son, who did amazing miracles, who walked on water, who healed every disease and sickness that was presented to Him, who raised the dead; He was the Christ, the promised Messiah, about whom the Scriptures testified centuries before He was born
 - vi) You must also tell them that this Jesus of Nazareth never committed a single sin, and thus was pure and holy, blameless...
 - vii) Therefore, Jesus came as our substitute, who shed His blood on the cross in our place, dying under the wrath of God to justify sinners
 - viii) You must tell them that God raised Him from the dead on the third day, and that He lives forever at the right hand of the Almighty
 - ix) THIS CONTENT IS THE GOSPEL
- d. Without this good news being communicated about Christ, sinners will die in their sins
5. It is while this content is being shared that God creates faith in the heart of the listener

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Two direct consequences of this truth:

- 6. Therefore, this content must be **proclaimed** throughout the world
 - a. This is the force of verses 13-15
 - b. No one can be saved if no one goes to proclaim the message
 - c. Do you cherish the truths we have discussed here today?
 - i) Do you cherish the deity of Christ?
 - ii) Do you cherish the fact that God raised Him from the dead?

d. TELL SOMEBODY about it!!

e. And support the great missionary endeavor... pray for missions

7. Therefore also, this content must be **protected** from all attacks

Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

Illus. Battle of Lexington, the beginning of the Revolutionary War

On April 15th, 1775, Major General Thomas Gage, commanding the British garrison in Boston, decided to send a column of seven hundred troops. Learning that the depot in Concord held a growing store of gunpowder and arms, he sent these soldiers twenty miles from Boston to seize the military supplies. On the evening of the 18th, Dr. Joseph Warren, President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, sent [Paul Revere](#) and other messengers to Lexington to warn patriots there.

By dawn on April 19, 1775, the column of British troops numbered over a thousand. As they marched into Lexington, they were met by a small band of militia, called "Minutemen," commanded by Captain John Parker. The colonials had decided enough was enough...

Captain Parker gave this famous order to his men: **"Stand your ground . . . if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!"**

This is the proverbial "line in the sand." That is where the American war for Independence began.

If the rights of colonial citizens were worth fighting for, how much more the truths of the gospel

The future of Christianity in America is almost certainly a battleground over these basic doctrines

The Lexington Militia was forewarned, and they stood ready to fight... not to budge an inch

We are also forewarned... this content of faith WILL BE ATTACKED

People will question the exclusivity of Christ... they will question whether or not we need to believe that Jesus is Lord, and that He rose from the dead

Paul has answered that forever in this Scripture:

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

F. Applications

1. Cherish the basic facts of the Christian faith: Christ's incarnation, Christ's resurrection
 - a. Cherish the simplicity of saving faith
 - b. Let this simplicity calm your heart
 - c. Cherish the fact that God saved you... He gave you an incredible gift;
 - d. Unlike the Marines' polished sword which was "EARNED. NEVER GIVEN." This eternal salvation was GIVEN... NEVER EARNED
 - e. Therefore, give thanks and praise to God for His indescribable gift... and forever shut your mouth from all boasting except in Christ
 - f. Let this simplicity to saving faith be all the assurance you need
 - i) Ask yourself: "Do I believe that Christ is Lord? Do I believe He is God in the flesh? Do I believe He died for my sins, and that God raised Him from the dead? Then I will be saved!!!"
 - ii) Realize no one can believe these things unless God has already worked this in your heart
 - iii) Build the entirety of your life on these unshakeable facts... facts written in the annals of human history, facts that no argumentation on devilish attack can remove
2. Protect these doctrines from attack... and support with prayer and encouragement pastors, evangelists, and theologians who stand on the front line and protect these doctrines from attack
3. Proclaim these doctrines to your lost neighbors, coworkers, and friend
4. Live up to your confession
 - a. You confess that Jesus is Lord... fine! Live under the Lordship of Christ!
 - b. Remember Jesus' haunting question:

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"