

Romans 10:9

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[0 : 00] Amen. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Oh, sing hallelujah. Join the chorus. Sing with the redeemed. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Now, we've sung those words, but we acknowledge that it is some claim that we make, because that's what we're doing when we sing these words.

We're lifting up words of praise to God, certainly, but we're also making a claim, a truth claim. We are declaring that this is true, that Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. And by any reasonable measure, that could be viewed as certainly a bold claim. Some might say a ridiculous claim.

[1 : 04] That Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, who died, who was buried, on a dark and somber Friday, rose again from the dead as dawn broke on Sunday morning.

But not only that. That is not the extent of the claim. The claim goes beyond that. The claim is that that same Jesus who met with the women on that first resurrection Sunday, of whom the angel declared, He is not here.

He is risen. The claim extends beyond that. The claim is that that same Jesus is alive today, some 2,000 years on. That is indeed some claim.

And I have a simple question for you this morning. Do you believe the claim to be true? I suppose there are different answers to that question. I'm not going to put words in your own mouth.

You can answer it for yourself. But there are possibilities in terms of the answer to that question. Your answer may be, yes, I do believe that to be true. You may take the view that that is not true.

[2 : 14] Or at the very least, you think it highly unlikely that that actually happened. You may be undecided. You may not be sure. You know, you wonder, well, it might be true. Lots of people think it's true, but then lots of people don't think it's true, and you're not really very sure where to place yourself in terms of the possible answers.

Another question that I could pose that kind of follows on from that is does it matter? Does it matter what you believe concerning this truth claim that Jesus rose from the dead?

I suppose at one level, it doesn't matter a great deal, and let me just explain what I mean by that. It doesn't matter in the sense that what you believe does not determine the truth or otherwise of the claim.

Whether Jesus rose from the dead or not is not determined by what you think. Be it believing it or not believing it. It's either true or it's not true, and what you believe doesn't make one whit of difference to what actually happened.

So, at that level, it doesn't really matter. However, at another level, it matters a great deal. It matters at a personal level. It matters to you.

[3 : 28] For you, it is a matter of life and death. Your salvation, your eternal destiny rests on whether you believe that Christ is risen.

Now, you may not believe that, but I'm making that claim or challenging you with that statement. And I want you to listen to what the Apostle Paul has to say. He certainly takes the view that your salvation, your eternal destiny, rests on your convictions concerning this truth claim about Jesus being risen from the dead.

We're going to read just one verse in Romans chapter 10 and verse 9. So, as I mentioned when we were reading from Luke's gospel, that reading serves as a backdrop to what we're going to be talking about.

But what we're actually going to be focusing our attention on is or are the words of Paul in this letter that he wrote to the believers in Rome. And in chapter 10 and in verse 9, listen to what he says.

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.

[4 : 45] In this verse, these few words take us to the heart of the gospel, to the heart of what it means to be a Christian. Indeed, Paul himself introduces these words in a manner that makes it clear that he considered it to be the heart of the gospel.

Notice what he says just before verse 9. In verse 8 he says, 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.

The word of faith we are proclaiming. So the good news, the gospel, the totality, if you wish, of what we're proclaiming to you spoken of or described as the word of faith, what is it?

What is this word of faith? And then Paul provides what we might call this summary statement that of course isn't an exhaustive description of the good news but is deemed and presented by Paul to be a summary that captures the heart of the matter.

And it is these words 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.

[5 : 59] You maybe remember the time that we read of in Acts of the jailer in Philippi and as he was witness to all that was going on in terms of his prisoners and the signs that were taking place, the earthquake, what did he cry out in the midst of that personal crisis?

What must I do to be saved? Well, here is the answer to that question. 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.

And the verse of course not only would have provided an answer to the Philippian jailer, it provides an answer, it provides the same answer to women and men who today ask that same question.

What must I do to be saved? How can I become a Christian? And as I said a moment ago, the verse does not provide an exhaustive answer of all that it means to be a Christian, but it does provide a clear and a sufficient answer to that question.

Returning to where we began just a few moments ago, indeed, where we began our service singing the hymn. This is a verse that teaches that believing that Jesus rose again from the dead and is alive today is essential for our salvation.

[7 : 25] It matters. Now, some of you, if we just focus in on the language of the verse, some of you may be unfamiliar or may be uncomfortable with the language of being saved.

What's that about? What does that mean? You might quite reasonably be asking, well, what does that mean? It's kind of religious language, isn't it?

And indeed, it's language that maybe we don't use that much. Maybe in other Christian traditions we hear it more, you know, I'm saved or are you saved or he was saved. Of course, it's very biblical language and we're going to be thinking about it, but you may be unfamiliar with it or just not quite sure what it's all about.

You may be asking, and this could be a function of your understanding or otherwise of what the word means, but you may be asking, well, do I need to be saved? Whatever that is. Well, let's think about this verse and hopefully thinking about this verse or exploring and studying this verse will help us have a better sense of what this means.

And there's really two questions that we're going to pose and try and answer and that is, what does it mean to be saved? The language that Paul uses here, 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.

[8 : 41] Well, what does that mean? What does it mean to be saved? But then the second question is, what do you need to do to be saved? Which is really Paul's particular concern in what he says in this verse, what it is that we, you, need to do.

So the first question, what does it mean to be saved? Now, our text, this verse, doesn't give us the answer. And indeed, even in the words or the verses that follow, you don't have an answer to that question.

What does it mean to be saved? The verse, and Paul's statement of this, assumes knowledge. Now, the reason Paul can assume knowledge is that this is a letter and he's working on the assumption that people have been reading the letter from the beginning and they've reached this point.

And of course, if we had read the letter from the beginning and reached this point, then we would have come to this verse with an understanding of what it means to be saved because this is something that Paul deals with in the course of the previous chapters.

But of course, we haven't done that this morning and so we do need to try and answer the question, what does it mean to be saved? What does being saved involve? And I think we can summarize, I suppose, would be the way of putting it or we can present what the Bible teaches about salvation as involving two aspects.

[10 : 10] It involves being saved from and it involves being saved for. So, I think if we think of it in those two ways together, that gives us I think a good picture or a good explanation of what it is or what it means to be saved.

We're saved from and we're saved for. So, first of all, what are we saved from? Well, why did Jesus come? What does the Bible tell us? Or how does the Bible answer that question, why did Jesus come?

In Matthew's Gospel, the very first chapter and in verse 21, we're told that Jesus came to save his people from their sins. To save us from something.

Save us from what? Well, the Bible tells us to save us from our sins. You need to be, we need to be, we all need to be saved from our sins.

So, that takes us a little bit further but what does that mean? Well, what the Bible teaches is that sin that we are all guilty of has consequences and Jesus saves us from those consequences.

[11 : 13] Let me just mention three of them. Three consequences of sin that Jesus saves us from. One consequence of sin is that we are alienated from God.

Sin, or disobedience, separates us from God. Now, that reality is very visibly illustrated in the account of the fall at the very beginning in Genesis chapter 1, the fall of our first fathers Adam and Eve.

When we read the first chapters of the Bible, we find that Adam and Eve enjoyed friendship with God. God, they were close to God, they were together with God.

But when they disobeyed, what happened? When they disobeyed, they were removed from the garden, they lost the friendship that they had enjoyed with God.

They were alienated from God, they were separated from God as a consequence of their sin. Another consequence of our sin is that we are under the anger of God.

[12 : 18] God is angry with us. Now, that's something we're maybe a little bit uncomfortable with as well. We think, oh, that doesn't seem to tie in with what people tell me about God being love and grace and mercy.

But the Bible makes it very clear that disobedience, your disobedience, our disobedience, angers God. It is a holy anger, it is a righteous anger, but it is a real anger.

And we need to be saved from this anger. Indeed, in this very letter, Paul has stated this truth very explicitly just two or three chapters prior. In Romans chapter 5 and verse 9, we read, since we have now been justified by His blood, that is, by the death of Jesus, how much more shall we be saved from, saved from what?

Saved from God's wrath through Him. So, saved from God's anger. So, the consequences of sin are alienation from God, the anger of God, and ultimately, death.

The wages of sin is death. Again, something Paul states in this letter in chapter 6 and in verse 23. The wages of sin is death. Not just physical death, but spiritual death.

[13 : 28] So, these are the consequences of our sin, of your sin, that we need to be saved from. And, to be saved is to be delivered from these consequences, to no longer be alienated from God, to have God's anger removed, to be delivered from death.

When we are saved, God forgives our sin on account of Jesus having paid the penalty for our sin on the cross, and so we are delivered from the consequences.

So, the core problem, the root problem, is our sin, but that's dealt with by the cross, by Jesus baiting that sin on himself. And so, that then delivers us from the consequences of our sin that we've just highlighted, or at least some of them.

So, we're saved from these things, but I also said that to get a fuller picture of what it means to be saved, we need to think about what we're saved for. And, in effect, this is the other side of the same coin.

So, you'll see the symmetry in a moment when I say those things that we are saved for. We are saved for friendship with God, we are saved for the approval of God, and we are saved for living the life that God would have us live.

[14 : 44] First of all, we're saved for friendship with God, and not just friendship, but to be part of His family. Being saved involves being adopted into God's family.

I was, this truth, which is a familiar truth, but I was, it was brought powerfully to my attention just this past week when I was preparing a short talk for the CU at Robert Gordon's, and we were, they'd given me the passage, they were making their way through Mark's gospel, and the passage was in Mark chapter 5 where you have the story or the account of Jairus' daughter, but also of the woman, the sick woman who had had an issue of blood for 12 years, to use the AV language, and her circumstances were very desperate, and just to cut to the point that I want to get to is Jesus wonderfully heals her, but then He says this to her, He says, daughter, your faith has made you well.

And so even in that tender language of daughter, this is a woman who had been marginalized, who was isolated, who her very condition meant that she was on the margins of society, she didn't belong to anybody, nobody would take ownership of her, and yet Jesus addresses her in this way, daughter.

We are saved for being part of the family of God, we are saved for enjoying friendship with God, it's not just that we're no longer enemies, that would be a good thing, but we are now friends.

But also, as I said a moment ago, we're saved for the approval of God. God is no longer angry for us, indeed quite the reverse. He is pleased with us as He sees us united to Jesus.

[16 : 31] As we embrace Jesus, as we hold on to Jesus, as we trust in Jesus, as we are found in Jesus, and the Father, when He sees us, He sees Jesus, and He is delighted with us.

We enjoy His fulsome approval from being under His righteous anger to being now placed in that shadow of His warm approval.

And we're saved for life, not only saved from death, but saved for life, granted new life, or eternal life, to use the language that the Bible itself uses.

And when we speak about eternal life, we're not just talking about quantity of life, but we're talking about quality of life, life in a new spiritual dimension that at its heart involves knowing God.

And that's something that is stated very clearly, very explicitly in John's Gospel in chapter 17 and verse 3. Now this is Jesus giving His definition, if you wish, of eternal life, recorded by John.

[17 : 41] And what do we read? Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. So this eternal life that we are saved for, at its heart, is a relationship with the living and true God and with His Son, Jesus.

So this then answers in a small measure the question, what does it mean to be saved? But let's move on to the second question, which is, what do you need to do to be saved? And it's here really that the verse comes to its own, our text, because this is really the answer that Paul provides in this verse.

What do you need to do to be saved? And well, the verse gives us a clear answer. There are two things. We need to confess and we need to believe. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I don't think there's a huge significance in the order of these two things that we need to do. And let's just begin with the second of the two, which is believing in our heart.

So we're back to our text in Romans 10 and verse 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.

[19 : 09] Believe in your heart that God raised Him, that is Jesus, from the dead. We have to believe and this belief has clear content.

Now this is very important. It's not just about believing. There are many people who believe many things. Even in our growingly or increasingly secular society, we hear the government speaking seemingly in approving terms of faith communities.

And the impression seems to be that, well, it's good to believe. It's good to have something you believe in. And while we all believe in different things, it doesn't really matter what you believe, but it's good to believe.

Well, Paul takes a different view. Paul identifies clear content content that is involved in this belief.

We are to believe what we are required to believe. And what is it? What is it that we need to believe? Well, to be saved, you need to believe specific truths, namely that Jesus rose from the grave.

[20 : 14] If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. Now that does maybe throw up a question, is that all we need to believe?

Is it enough just to believe that one truth that God raised Jesus from the dead? Do we not have to believe truth concerning who Jesus is, His identity, about His life, about His death?

Well, we do. We need to believe all of these things. But to believe in the resurrection is to believe all that the gospel tells us concerning the identity and work of Jesus.

When Paul was in Athens and preaching in Athens, he made it clear in something that he says towards the end of his sermon or his address or his discourse that the resurrection serves as a proof of the veracity of the whole message.

So it's almost as if he says, well, if you believe the resurrection, implicit is that you're believing everything about the one who was resurrected. It's almost a shorthand way of saying all that you need to believe is to believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

[21 : 27] Let me just read what Paul said in Acts chapter 17 and in verse 31. In Acts chapter 17 and in verse 31, he says, he's addressing his audience there in Athens and he says, for he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

And then he says this, he has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. So he's given proof of these other truths by raising Jesus from the dead.

And so to believe that Jesus rose from the dead is to believe all that is said about who he is and what he has done. To be saved requires that we believe what the Bible teaches us concerning the identity and the mission of Jesus.

And so the question for you is, do you believe what the Bible teaches concerning who Jesus is, concerning his perfect life, concerning his death on the cross in the place of sinners, concerning his resurrection?

Do you believe these things? This is what we must believe. But there's another question that I want to pose before moving on to the second requirement, which is to confess. And I want to just pose the question, where do we believe?

[22 : 46] Paul says in the text that we are to believe in our heart. He could have just said, you know, it wouldn't have been necessary perhaps for him to have made that specific point for it is there in verse 9, believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

He could have just said, believe that God raised him from the dead. But he chooses to use this language that we are to believe in our heart. Now in the Bible, the heart is presented to us as the core of one's being, of one's inner man or woman.

It includes the intellect, but it also involves the will and the emotions. To believe in your heart is to give intellectual assent to truth, but it is also to make an appropriate response of the will to that truth.

In this case, to embrace the Savior who is offered to you in the gospel. So not simply acknowledge, well, these things are true, but to embrace him as your Savior.

And all of that is included in this statement or this requirement that we believe. So we are to believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead.

[24 : 04] But then the other thing that we are to do is that we are to confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. So if believing is of the heart or inward, then confessing is the necessary outward expression of that inward reality.

And to be saved, says Paul, there is a requirement of public confession or profession. But what? What are we to testify to?

What are we to confess? Well, we are told that Jesus is Lord. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. Now that's a simple statement, but it's brimming with significance.

And I think such a confession, properly understood, involves what we might call a three-fold conviction concerning who Jesus is, concerning the authority that he enjoys, and also a personal submission to that authority.

We think, first of all, of who Jesus is. When we say that Jesus is Lord, we are making a claim of huge significance. In the Roman Empire, the time at which this is written and the context in which those who are reading this letter are immersed, indeed, they are in the heart of the empire there in Rome.

- [25 : 22] And in the Roman Empire, the highest title that Caesar could claim was Kurios, or Lord. And it was a divine title. But more importantly for the Jews, the designation Lord was a designation that pointed to the divine name, Jehovah, or Yahweh.

In the Old Testament, Yahweh is translated in Greek, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, by this word, Kurios, or Lord. So for a Jew to confess Jesus is Lord is for them to declare Jesus is Yahweh, Jesus is God.

So this then is what we must confess if we are to be saved. Jesus is Lord. And as we do, we declare our conviction that He is the eternal Son of God.

So who Jesus is is implicit in this confession, but also, and very clearly, the authority that He enjoys. Now that authority flows necessarily from an understanding of who He is.

However, the confession Jesus is Lord points particularly to the authority He enjoys as the one exalted by the Father to the highest place, as Paul describes that in his letter to the Philippians in chapter 2 and verses 9 and 11.

- [26 : 46] Let's just remind ourselves of what Paul says there. In Philippians chapter 2 and verses 9 to 11, we read, and Paul is speaking of Jesus, and he says, as therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

To confess that Jesus is Lord is to recognize that He enjoys all authority in heaven and on earth. And related to that, to declare Jesus as Lord involves a personal submission to that authority.

So again, it's not just simply saying, yeah, I believe that's true, I believe He's in charge, I believe He's been exalted, and He's in charge of everything, but it also means saying, I will submit to the authority of King Jesus.

it involves submitting all that we are, all that we have to Him. To utter the words and yet to refuse to submit to His authority is meaningless.

Indeed, you might say it's worse than meaningless. So while it may be a simple thing to voice the words, Jesus is Lord, to do so in a meaningful, in an honest, in a sincere way is huge.

- [28 : 11] And so it's not surprising what Paul says when he writes to the church in Corinth in his first letter in chapter 12 in verse 3, he says this, no one can say, Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Nobody can say that with a grasp of what that means, of acknowledging who He is, of the authority that He enjoys, of personally submitting to that authority. Nobody can do that except as enabled by the Holy Spirit.

So the question for each of us this morning is this, have you confessed that Jesus is your Lord? Do you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? But also, have you confessed, have you publicly acknowledged before others this conviction that Jesus is Lord?

Now, some suggest that in the early church this was the confession of believers at baptism. That may be or it may not be, we don't know for sure. But what is something we know for sure is that however it is done, in whatever context it is done, it is necessary for us to publicly confess our commitment to Jesus, to acknowledge that He is our Lord, that He died for our sins, that God raised Him from the dead for us.

Now, in our own tradition, one way we do that is when we become members of the church, perhaps if we've been baptized as infants, there comes a point when we then publicly acknowledge our faith, use the language that we employ, and declare that Jesus is our Lord, that He died, that Jesus died for me and gave Himself for me, again, to use language that Paul uses in writing to the Galatians.

[29 : 59] So is that something that you've done? Is that something you need to do? Is that something that God is calling you to do? What do you need to do to be saved? Well, Paul gives us the answer.

Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Oh, sing hallelujah. Join the chorus. Sing with the redeemed. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Let's pray. Have a good one.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.