

Salvation Available for All

I wasn't raised with any particular religion," Emily said to her roommate, Amaya. "I always thought Christianity was more complicated than that."

Amaya and Emily had been college roommates for the past seven months. Amaya had shared her faith in Christ and often spoken of her relationship with Him. At first, Emily thought it a little strange. Then she became jealous of the love and comfort Amaya said she had found.

"I also viewed religion as being for more simple-minded people," said Emily.

"The message of salvation is simple and free," said Amaya. "To receive it, you need to have a heart of a child."

"I'm not interested in religion," said Emily, "but I do want to experience Christ like you have. What do I have to do? Are there a lot of rules and classes to go through?"

Amaya reached out and took her friend's hands. She shared the Gospel message once again with Emily. When she finished, she said, "Are you ready to accept Christ?"

"Yes," said Emily.

Amaya then led her roommate and friend into a prayer where she confessed her sins, asked for forgiveness of her sins, and accepted Christ as Savior and Lord of her life.

Emily opened her eyes. "Is that it? Am I saved?"

"If you believed and meant it, then yes," said Amaya. "That's the beginning! You have just begun a new relationship with Christ!"

1. *What are some ways that sin can harm or damage us?*

2. *What are some prerequisites if a person wants to be rescued from the destructive consequences of their own sin?*

3. *What does it mean when we say that a person must believe in Jesus to be saved?*

The Truth Is at Our Doorstep

Romans 10:5-8, KJV

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 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:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 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.

Romans 10:5-8, NIV

⁵Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them."

⁶But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷"or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say?

"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim.

Paul longed for all of Israel to be saved (Rom. 10:1). But although they were zealous for God, their zeal was "not based on knowledge" (vs. 2) regarding God's plan of salvation. The righteousness that was required to be right with God would not come through self-effort (vs. 3). It had to be imparted to them by Him. And this could happen only if they trusted in Jesus and not in themselves or their religious traditions for what was required to be saved (vs. 4).

Now, in verse 5, Paul quoted Moses, the Lord's authoritative spokesman. God inspired Moses to write that those who want to obey God's laws and commands "will live by them" (Lev. 18:5). The law of Moses represented the way of life for those who followed the Lord.

In contrast to the righteousness that some think comes through obedience is that which comes by faith. Once again quoting Moses, Paul wrote that one doesn't have to go to great lengths to find the truth about it, perhaps

by going up to heaven to find it or by bringing Jesus back from the dead to do so (vss. 6-8; Deut. 30:11-14). The truth about God's path to righteousness is "near you" (vs. 8). It is not a secret yet to be revealed or one that is hidden but is a message that has already been proclaimed.

4. *What can result if one believes that they can be saved through self-effort or by obedience to God's laws?*

5. *What does finding the truth about God's path to righteousness not require? Why is that so?*

What Is Required to Be Saved

Romans 10:9-13, KJV

9 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.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 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.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:9-13, NIV

⁹If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Paul next explained what is required to have a saving relationship with God. It begins by confessing that Jesus is Lord, not just a man who had the spirit of God dwelling in Him but that He was and is divine—God in human form.

It means making Him the center of one's life and accepting the truth of His life, death, and resurrection.

What's also required is outward evidence of one's desire to follow Jesus. Although faith begins in the heart, it is something that can't nor should be hidden.

These requirements are universal. All who come to God by putting their trust in Jesus will be saved, with no distinction between Jews or Gentiles in this respect. And, as Paul stated earlier (Rom. 9:33) and Isaiah noted centuries before (Isa. 8:14; 28:16), trusting in God's means of salvation provides a foundation for life that cannot be shaken. It is a decision that will not bring shame or regret.

6. *What is required if we are to have a faith-based relationship with God?*

The Message Has Been Heard

Romans 10:14-17, KJV

14 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?

15 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!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:14-17, NIV

¹⁴How, 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? ¹⁵And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

¹⁶But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Paul next addressed some misconceptions some may have had about those who haven't placed their faith in God through Christ. One was that those who haven't heard about Jesus can't be held accountable for what they didn't know about Him.

At first it may seem that Paul agreed with this. He noted that one cannot believe the truth unless they've heard it, that one cannot hear it unless someone speaks it, and that someone can't speak unless they've been sent (vs. 14-15). It may seem from this that Paul was urging more to become evangelists by noting Isaiah's promise those who bring the Good News to others will be blessed (Isa. 52:7).

But Paul then noted that the Jews had sufficient information to know who Jesus was. He quoted a portion of Isaiah 53:1: "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" This comes from a passage (Isa. 52:13—53:12) that prophesies about a servant of God who would be "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (vs. 5). Most would likely have been familiar with this passage or would have heard it at some time. Paul referenced it to emphasize that the Jews had heard enough to know who Jesus was and therefore had no excuse for rejecting Him.

The Gentiles had enough information as well. They had opportunities to hear the words of Jesus either directly or through the Gospels. They also had a clear understanding of who God is through nature (Rom. 10:18) and no excuse for rejecting Jesus by claiming they just didn't know. But God continues to reveal Himself to those who are not seeking Him and holds His hands out to the obstinate (10:20-21).

7. *What misconception about those who are ignorant about Jesus does Paul seem to be addressing?*

8. *Why does it seem at first that Paul may have agreed with this?*

9. *Why did those who rejected Jesus have no excuse for doing so?*

This Is Good News

In my younger days, I often responded to someone who was asking me to do something I didn't want to do by acting as if I didn't hear them. I pretended to be deaf, hoping that I could use that as an excuse to avoid the consequences of refusing to do what they were asking of me.

I wonder how often we pretend to be deaf in our relationship with God. How often, for example, do we ignore God by refusing to acknowledge our brokenness or the consequences of our sin and our need for redemption? How often do we turn a deaf ear to Him by failing to acknowledge that we all sin, fall short of the glory of God, and need to be rescued from the worst in ourselves?

How often do we appear to be deaf when it comes to accepting God's remedy for our brokenness? Many of us are inclined to believe that spiritual improvement comes through self-effort and that what it is required to be right with God is working harder to be good. We can't accept that the only righteousness that matters is that which God imparts to us. It is a free gift that God gives us when we place our trust in Him and what Jesus did on the Cross.

God has provided a means to having a right relationship with Him. This is good news! He also gave us information about how to find and follow His path to redemption. He did this through His prophets, through the words of Jesus, and through the testimony and writings of those who put their trust in Him. Today God continues to proclaim the promise that all who listen to what He has to say and who believe it can and will be saved.

10. *What are some ways you've turned a deaf ear to God in the past?*

11. *Why do you think you responded that way?*

12. *What would help you become a better listener so you don't miss what He's trying to tell you today?*

Are You Listening?

God never tires of loving or caring for us. He is constantly reaching out to us, even during those times when we are obstinate or disobedient, hoping we'll draw closer to Him or that we'll come into a saving relationship with Him if we haven't already done so. And He promises that if we faithfully try to hear what He's telling us and believe in what He's saying that we will be redeemed, that we will be rescued from the worst in ourselves, and that we will have a place with Him in eternity.

► *What are you hearing from God today? How does He want you to respond?*

KEY VERSE

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. —Romans 10:13, KJV

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
—Romans 10:13, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of August 2 through August 8

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** 1 Timothy 6:6-10—Love of Money, Root of Evil.
- Tues.** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7—Control Your Own Body.
- Wed.** Acts 7:2-7—Abraham, Father of the Faithful.
- Thurs.** Hebrews 11:4-7, 17-27—Worthy Examples of the Faithful.
- Fri.** Hebrews 13:1-9, 17-19—Actions of Faith in Daily Life.
- Sat.** Hebrews 13:10-16—Like Jesus, Offer Sacrifices to God.
- Sun.** Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16—The Living Actions of Faith.