

**Record of Sermons delivered during the month of**  
**August 2020**

(added progressively after each Sunday)

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(see following pages)

Romans 10:1-13, (6:1-14)

## The Resurrection of Christ – Pt 2

Rom 8:11

***11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.***

Last week we commenced to present, part 1 of the topic, The Resurrection of Christ – as seen in Romans. So far we have reminded ourselves from the Scriptures that:

**The resurrection was an act of the Triune God.**

**The identity of Christ was finally made clear, by His Resurrection.**

**Belief in the Resurrection is ‘part and parcel’ of a Saving Faith.**

- Now we have three more points:

**Christ’s resurrection secured our justification.** Once again the last two verses of Chapter 4. <sup>24</sup> ... *Jesus our Lord*, <sup>25</sup> *who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

Christian Believer: When Christ lived His life on earth He lived the life you should have lived, but haven’t. He lived it on your behalf! When Christ died on the Cross, He died the death which you should have died, but haven’t, because He as your substitute died it instead.

What guarantee do I have, that the life that was lived on my behalf, was indeed a perfect one? The guarantee is the resurrection, because if there had been one sin in that life, he would still be in the tomb today, having died for his own sins. Also what guarantee do I have that God really did accept the death of Christ on behalf of His people? How do I know for certain that he didn’t just die for his own sins and that’s all that there was to it? The resurrection! The resurrection displays to the world, that what He did on behalf of His people was perfect, finished and complete. And God has accepted it without reserve. Not only that, but God has taken Him, in His human Nature – while He continues to be God the Son – right to His very right hand. Where the risen Lord represents, presents and intercedes for His people right now.

Christ’s Resurrection has secured my justification. Olyott continues by referring to Romans Chapter 5 verse 10:

<sup>10</sup> *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.* If when I was so far from God, Christ’s humiliation actually brought me near to God, how much more – being near to God – will Christ’s exaltation, save me. Further, look to Chapter 8 from verse 33: <sup>33</sup> *Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.* <sup>34</sup> *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God,*

*who indeed is interceding for us.* Can anybody bring, successfully, a charge of guilty against you, as a Christian believer? “It’s ludicrous,” says Paul, “to think that they can!” Because the life that you should have lived, Christ has lived for you; the death that you should have died, Christ has died for you, and the very Christ that did this for you has risen again from the dead and is interceding for you at God’s right-hand. It’s impossible for anyone to think that they could bring a charge of guilty against you and make that charge stick! His whole reasoning - that Christ’s work has obviously been accepted - is that His resurrection, exaltation and intercession, makes it clear that His work has been accepted, and therefore in God’s eyes there is no guilt laid to my account today.

The memory of our sin is a very troubling thing! We only have to sit still briefly to remember the sins of this hour; day and the past week, as well as sins of our youth. We only have to live a few hours, and someone reminds us of our faults. We can think back to all the times we have grieved God. Our memory as thoughts is flooded with thoughts of unworthiness and shame.

But you can be certain of this: That when you remember your sins, it may be your memory that remembers them, it may be the memory of others, it may be the devil. But it’s never God who reminds you of your sins - ever. No thought of your sins is brought to your mind by God. Because if you are truly a Christian believer all those sins have been dealt with. They are not in God’s memory. The memory of them which makes you ashamed - makes you want to crawl away and tells you that God won’t have you today - that thought never comes from God. Because God’s thoughts towards you are always about forgiveness, access, acceptance and pardon. That is because of the resurrection. The One who did it all for you is always at His right-hand. God can never look on His Church or upon you, without seeing at His right-hand, in glorious majesty the Lord Jesus Christ, whose presence there secures your acquittal. You can walk through life with a conscience at peace. Whoever reminds you of your faults, you may know that He is in heaven: “no tongue can bid you thence depart.” (See alternative wording of verse 2 Rejoice! 250 ‘Before the Throne of God Above’)

- From Chapter 6 (of Romans) we also find that not only does the Resurrection of Christ secure our justification it also **secures our sanctification**. That is, our actual growth in holy living is all due to the resurrection. Together with Romans 6:1-14, we consider Romans 7:4.

*<sup>4</sup> Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. And also again **Romans 14:9** <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

The Romans 6 passage we have studied previously: we are united to Christ in His death and resurrection. His Spirit “in” us is the source and power of our growth to maturity (sanctification) in that ‘newness of life’ which follows justification and rebirth (spiritually) at our conversion by the power of the Godhead. In this we become empowered, to more and more, ‘bear fruit for God’. Clearly we can’t grow to Christian maturity without the Resurrection of Christ.

We forget the resurrection at our peril.

In explaining the concept and value of unity with Christ in His death and resurrection, Stuart Olyott refers to the Romans 6:1-14 passage. He relies on having previously preached on this (as we have: April 5, 2020) and repeats the illustration that was used then. His second illustration, about *a poor slave who was kept as a prisoner in the estate of his tyrannical master*, was used to illustrate that: When we are unconverted, we are in bondage to sin and we cannot break that bondage. The way that God delivers us from that bondage is that He actually 'kills' us; He then 'raises' us from the dead, where we spend the remainder of our days in glad service to our new master. When is it that the believer is 'killed'? When Jesus died He didn't just die for you, says the New Testament. When Jesus died you died with Him. That death is actually reckoned to be your death! You are reckoned, by union with Christ, to have actually died at Calvary yourself! And when Christ rose from the dead, because you are in union with Christ, you have actually been reckoned to have risen again, when Christ rose from the dead. That Judean resurrection is also your resurrection. And just as an old master (in the illustration) cannot make any demands on a dead slave, once we've come to Christ and we have entered into the experience of 'union with Christ', which we were chosen for before the world was made, sin can insist no more that we should go its way. Instead we've died with Christ and we are raised in newness of life, which is precisely the truth which is portrayed and proclaimed in Christian Baptism.

Once that slave was living in the new palace, occasionally in the market, or elsewhere, he sees the old master. The old master says, "Do this." And because he was the old master, sometimes the slave is terrified and actually does what the old master says. But the old master has neither the right nor power to make the slave do that. The slave can say, "No! You can no longer have any claim over me, because when I died your claim over me died at the same time." The slave may actually, legally, morally and powerfully say, "No!" to sin. All by virtue of the Resurrection of Christ! Being our resurrection. This Sunday and every Lord's Day proclaims the Resurrection of Christ. One of the things that it means that the Christian believer may do, is that he may say, "No" to temptation. It may seem so strong that it is irresistible. But there is no temptation, promises God's Word, that is so powerful that you must give in to it. You can say, "No". And when you say, "No", the power of the old master immediately withers, he has no power over you, because you were raised to 'newness of life', when Christ was raised from the dead.

It's the same illustration with changes of characters, that Paul uses with the marriage analogy of Chapter 7. Then in Chapter 14 he explains that since Christ is the Master of your conscience no one can come to you and say, "You ought to do this or that!" No Christian has a right to do that to another Christian. Because when Christ rose from the dead, and we rose with Him, He established Himself as our only Lord. Our whole Sanctification is all tied up with the resurrection of Christ.

- Finally referring to Chapter 8:11. Christ's resurrection **secured our glorification.**

*<sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Paul could easily have argued our resurrection on the basis of our union with Christ. At Christ's rising from the dead we are reckoned to have risen with Him spiritually – our 'new birth' – at the same time, so we could logically reason that our bodies would eventually rise from the dead.

However the way He put it was this: you're a Christian; because the Spirit of God is within you; the Spirit of God who is in you is the same Spirit that raised Christ up from the grave. If the same Spirit who raised up Christ from the dead is actually dwelling in you, you can count on the fact that He can do for you, what He did for Christ.

The Spirit will do for you what He has already done for Christ! He will *give life to your mortal body*. He will raise you from the dead, just like He has already raised Christ from the dead. There is a marvellous day coming in the history of the world and it is as certain as the day of Christ's Resurrection. Christ is the 'first fruit'. The remainder of the harvest will follow. The very same power that raised Christ from the dead has already been active in our lives and raised us spiritually from the dead. The very same power which raised Him physically from the dead will also raise us physically from the grave. And then our salvation will have reached its final completion, consummation and logical conclusion.

We shall be with Christ. Like Christ. No sin in us. And our 'fallen' bodies will be changed into the likeness of His glorious body. Then on that last day we see, finally, what the effects the Resurrection of Christ have been on His people.

Every Sunday is resurrection day. Like the early Church the resurrection is essential for and central to our faith. In writing to the Christians in Roman and to us, Paul insists that we never forget that the Triune God has acted in history. That we never doubt who Jesus Christ is. The resurrection has made it clear. That when we become true believers that is one of the facts that we do believe. On that day our justification was secured. Similarly our sanctification was secured. On that day also our glorification was secured.

Without the resurrection there would be no Gospel. And therefore no good news for sinners. **But now is Christ risen!** (Answer?)

[2109]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen**

[mention listening to the full sermon by Olyott]

Romans 9:30-10:13

## The Five Points of the Compass

Romans 9:33

<sup>33</sup> *as it is written,*

***“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”***

For today and next week we will engage in an interlude in our continuing exposition of the Letter to the Romans. In the context of Chapter 9, so far we have asserted the importance of God being in absolute control of His Creation: God’s Sovereignty and His Eternal Decree! We then took this further by showing the finer detail of Unconditional Election.

Over several weeks then we meditated on a portion of the Bible which is largely overlooked or deliberately rejected by much of modern day preaching.

We would now expect, if the pattern of the past months were to continue, that we would continue to concentrate on Chapter 10. Amongst other things we find there that Paul continues to be overcome with grief and disappointment that his own race, the Jews, have generally failed to accept the Gospel and its benefits. His explanation is that they have stumbled over the ‘rock’ of Christ. Whereas the Gentiles, by and large, didn’t.

The true believer – the one who sees: ‘Christ is all, and in all’<sup>1</sup> – recognises Christ as his absolutely, essential and dependable ‘rock’ of salvation. Whereas the ‘religious’ person, like the Jew of Paul’s experience, and the complacent, self-satisfied, self-reliant church person of today, stumbles over the sufficiency of Christ. Not willing to put aside their zeal in working at ... their self-generated expectation of salvation as payment for their efforts. Not willing to surrender to Christ for all.

Such zeal could be commendable. If it were directed by true knowledge. The Jew had all the benefits of God’s revelation. But interpreted it through the lens of their own pride. Their need to justify themselves by their own effort. To ‘be good and to do good’. And so does the majority of modern – often so obviously zealous – church people.

So at this point it is desirable that we pause our progress through Romans. An interlude. Let us be sure of the knowledge that is needed to guide our zeal for Christ. Let us examine the so called. “Five points of the Compass”:

<sup>1</sup> Colossians 3:11 <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,[\[a\]](#) free; but Christ is all, and in all.

On the earth a magnetic compass can show us the direction to the North Pole. Then if we know how to recognise South, West and East from that starting point we have a means of navigation. Of finding our way.

The Bible also has a compass, but it has 5 points. The word 'compass' not only has the meaning of a device for finding a direction, but also means the whole scope of a subject. So it is with the Bible's 5-point compass. It not only helps you steer your Christian life and understanding – so that your zeal is properly directed. But also these 5 points will help you understand the whole of the Scriptures. Because these 5 points run through the whole of the sixty-six Books of the Bible.

What is different between our Church and others? We believe and proclaim these 5 points of the compass. However it is time, in this interlude to begin to bring these 5 points out of the cupboard and make sure that we are still steering by them. Otherwise we will risk sliding away from true Christianity as so many around us have. We have pointed out recently that all the mainstream, traditional, reformed Churches had a common beginning and were initially true to the faith of the Apostles, but even ours, in the first three quarters of the twentieth Century lost it! It is time to revive the age-old doctrines of the Protestant Reformation! It's time to proclaim again, very clearly and simply, the great 5 points which were loved by those preachers who went through the British countryside in the eighteenth century, bringing thousands to Christ – with the consequence that the bloody revolutions so common in the rest of Europe were avoided.

It's time because, many Christians have forgotten these points and so their Churches have as well. While many Christians have abandoned them, knowing them, full-well. Alternatively many people misunderstand these truths, while worst of all many pervert them. So it is no wonder that the zeal of sincere professing Christians is misdirected as were the Jews that Paul agonised about.

Church history has shown, that when God has brought His Church back, to believe, proclaim, and live by, these great 5 truths, those have been the times when He has brought 'new life' also into the Church! He's 'breathed on it' again and brought it back to life, with holiness and clarity.

We start with some history.

1610, in the west of Continental Europe, in particular, Holland:

Someone has just died. Jacobus Arminius. He's a professor of theology. He's been very influential, having indoctrinated many younger theologians. They have bonded together and crystallised his teaching, into their 5 points.

Up to this time the Dutch churches together with all the major Protestant Churches of Europe, have believed and preached the great Bible truths that had been rediscovered at the Reformation. But the Arminians – the followers of J Arminius – want to change all this. So they take their 5 points to the Dutch Parliament. This was a protest or a remonstrance! They want the Churches of Europe to take a new direction – using their faulty compass.

Here are their 5 points:

- **Free will.** Yes Adam and Eve fell, but you none the less are still capable of choosing what is spiritually good for you. You are still able, unassisted by God, to exercise faith. You can choose of your own free will to receive the Gospel. You can chose of your own free will to be saved.
- **Conditional Election.** God has chosen to save all those, who of their own free will, chose to be saved. God takes people into His care, who respond favourably to the Gospel – because He knew beforehand that you were going to do it.
- **Universal Redemption.** Christ has died for everybody, they said. All you have to do to be saved right now, is to claim your part of what Christ did for everybody. Claim your share in what Christ did. (Christ didn't actually save anyone, but merely made it possible for you to be saved.)
- **The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is limited by man's free will.** When the Holy Spirit begins to work in an unbeliever to bring him to Christ, that person can resist the Holy Spirit. Can over-rule the Sovereign, God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can't give you spiritual life, unless you let Him.
- **Falling from Grace.** At the end of the day you are saved, only because you took the first step, Which is the logical and actual outcome of the above. Since you took the first step, in order to be saved, it follows that if you stop, taking steps, you will be lost! Ultimately it's all up to you.

On presentation of these protests to the Dutch Parliament<sup>2</sup> a Great Synod was called to consider their 5 points. It consisted of many preachers and students of the Word of God from Holland and from most Western Nations (except the French Protestants who were being violently persecuted for their faith, though they approved the outcome of this synod later) It was held in the town of Dort (Dordrecht). It deliberated for 7 months (in 1618) but at the end of it all they were unable to reconcile the Arminian protest with the Word of God.

This great Synod of Dort took up the position, that had been rediscovered at the Reformation by the reformers. In its judgement it drew up what we are calling the 5 points of the Compass. To answer the 5 faulty points of Arminius.

So to remember these 5 points we have the mnemonic: TULIP

- T. Total inability (or depravity)
- U. Unconditional Election
- L. Limited (therefore definite) Atonement
- I. Irresistible Calling
- P. Perseverance (or preservation) of the saints

T: Total inability. Men and women can't save themselves, because the 'fall' which took place in the garden of Eden, was a total fall.

U: Unconditional election. If men and women are to be saved, God must save them. And if it's God who is to save them He must be free to save whoever He wills.

L: Limited atonement. Seeing God has chosen to save certain people, those are the people for whom Christ died on the Cross.

I: Irresistible calling. Seeing God has chosen certain people and the Lord Jesus Christ has died for these people, those are the people the Holy Spirit calls into the experience and enjoyment of what Christ bought for them.

<sup>2</sup> In that period of history the separation of Church and State has not occurred as it has today.

P: Perseverance of the saints. Our salvation had its beginning in God. It will have its end in God. As He started it, He will make sure it all finishes correctly. Therefore everyone He has chosen, bought with Christ's blood, and called by the Holy Spirit, will enter into the eternal enjoyment of heaven.

Those are the five points of the compass that we will present in a series of interludes over future months. We will see in a no nonsense way that God's Word really does teach them all. This will illustrate that we are not merely dealing with Calvinism or the Synod of Dort, but with the *faith that was once for all delivered to the saints*. (Jude 3). And we will see what Spurgeon meant when he said more than a Century ago: "It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, that are called by nickname Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus."<sup>3</sup> He also said: "We don't look on these five points as five daggers or barbed shafts to thrust between the ribs of our enemies, but we look on them as five luminaries. Five lamps. Five great emanations. By which we see clearly the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"

So to more detail than the brief summary already shown:

T: Total Inability (alternatively and historically, depravity).

Over today and next week there will be 4 sub headings including 12 Bible references.

- **Its importance.**

The first item we need to understand: the reason for its importance. Much of our time together has focused on salvation. Men and women being saved. If we are to understand salvation, we must understand what is wrong with men and women. The state that men and women are in from their very birth. Your evaluation of the condition, all people initially, are in, must be correct.

In other words if you only have vague ideas about sin, then you will have vague ideas about salvation. If you have wrong ideas about sin, and its effects, you will have wrong ideas about salvation. You'll never understand what is necessary to save a sinner.

An example: If you believe that man in the Garden of Eden is only partially 'fallen', then you'll be satisfied with a point of view which believes that salvation is partly God's work and partly yours. You'll be satisfied with a view that teaches that God must receive some of the credit for saving us, but we can take some of the credit to ourselves.

Consider a doctor. A doctor can't prescribe a cure until he knows what the disease is. Or a mathematician. The solution is impossible until the problem is very specifically defined. And so you can't understand salvation until you know exactly what state people are in! That's the importance of this first point.

- Those great reformers. And they were great! Many of them bled and died for their religious convictions. **Those great reformers taught this:**  
On going to the Scriptures they found that men and women, boys and girls are in

<sup>3</sup> See also the Ligonier Ministries post beginning with this quote: <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/charles-spurgeon-calvinist/>

a state of Total depravity – from which they're totally unable to do anything about their lost condition, that is they cannot come to God of their own free will.

So what does 'total' depravity mean? It doesn't mean that every one of you is as bad as you could possibly be. Nor does it mean that you live and die without knowing what God wants from you. It's not impossible for you to be kind to other people. You certainly can, and many many are, outwardly religious – practically the whole Jewish race as Paul saw them, for example. Together with the majority of Church goers today!

It does mean that when mankind 'fell' in the garden, He fell in his totality! Everything about a man and a woman. Everything about a child is polluted with sin. Everything! Every thought; every word I speak; every deed I do – good or bad; every motive I have; every emotion I feel; every decision I take. All are polluted by sin.

Imagine three glasses. At first, two with pure, clear water and one with dense black ink. The latter represents the devil. He's as wicked as it's possible be! A clear water glass represents man and woman before the fall. They are as God created and intended: free of sin (but with the ability to chose to 'fall') Now we transfer from the glass representing the devil, just one drop of ink to the remaining glass of clear water. ... The water becomes cloudy until every part of the water in that glass is tainted. This represents mankind after the 'fall'. No longer what he was meant to be! Not as wicked as the devil, but sin has nonetheless polluted and stained and spoiled every part of him. That is the Doctrine of Total Depravity. Original sin!

So far then in our four sub-headings on the first of the Five Points Of The Compass, we have seen the importance of a correct knowledge and understanding of what is wrong with everyone from their very birth: having found that we have inherited from our first parents a state of total depravity, where 'total' covers everything about us. The devastating outcome of our inheritance from the first Adam, is we no longer have the ability, or desire to be saved. We still have 'free will', but the 'will' is only ever, 'free' to choose the things that one's nature desires. Our 'fallen', inherited nature does not desire God nor His salvation from this state of sin. We then behave entirely 'naturally' and freely! Meaning that, left to ourselves, we perish in sin and misery.

But, God's glory is seen, through the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ: God's plan for our salvation. We are 'born again'. Initially spiritually. We now inherit the life and work of Christ rather than Adam's failure. Our nature, earlier fallen, is converted by the Holy Spirit. We can at last come to God as He intended.

[2468]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen**

Ephesians 2:1-10

## The Five Points of the Compass – Part 2

Ephesians 2:3

<sup>3</sup> ... ***(we) were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.***

Last week we commenced this interlude in our regular study of Paul's letter to the Christian Churches in Rome: The Five Points of the Compass. In one sense a guide to the Scripture that directs our lives as Christians and also an overview of the 'full compass' of the 66 Books.

We found that the five points were in response to a serious heresy, in the early 1600's, which threatened the existence of the developing Reformation: Reforming from the degeneration of the Catholic<sup>4</sup> Church of Rome. Beginning with the first of the Five Points: the T of the mnemonic, TULIP, Total Inability. We introduced the first two of 4 sub-headings, with the final two to be taken up today.

The first sub-heading, considered the importance to our understanding of the means to Salvation, by fully understanding the state of 'natural' man from which he MUST be saved. The second was a summary of the Reformed teaching concerning what is alternatively called 'original sin'.

So to the remaining sub-headings:

- **The Biblical basis for the First point of this Compass.**

We believe these great truths because the Bible teaches them. That is the only reason we believe them! However we then see what the Bible teaches being confirmed all about us and in us.

Be careful, the verses we will cite are only a selection. There will be 12. But there are many, many more that are available.

Romans 5:12. The Bible teaches that men and woman, by the nature they are born with, are 'dead'! <sup>12</sup> *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*

—

You fear death because it is unnatural to the original creation by God. Everyone here, in your conscience, recognises that death shouldn't be. Physical death is only a symptom, a sign, of spiritual death. God said to Adam: <sup>17</sup> *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*" (Genesis 2:17)

But he lived for 100s of years after he ate that fruit. But he did die that day, spiritually! And that's why physical death is in the world. Death spiritually has the automatic consequence of eventual physical death.

<sup>4</sup> This word, with small "c", catholic, only means general or universal (*a wide variety of things; all embracing*), but in their pride the Church based on Rome and with a Pope has 'head' (whereas the only true head of the Church, in heaven and on earth is Christ) has misappropriated the word, with a capital "P" into their Title.

The Bible teaches that we are spiritually dead by nature. Consider Ephesians Chapter 2:1-6, where Paul talks to the Ephesians about what they were like before they became Christians: <sup>1</sup> *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> You were dead. Men and women by nature are dead.*

Men and women by nature are bound. By bound we mean fettered, chained, ensnared, that is imprisoned. **2 Timothy 2:24-26** Here Paul is writing to a young Christian Minister. <sup>24</sup> *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.* Look at any man or woman you know they are dead in sin and captive to the devil! It's worse than that! They are blind and deaf – needing to *come to their senses*.

Come to the Gospel of Mark: Here Jesus explains the difference between Christians and non-Christians. **Mark 4:11-12** <sup>11</sup> *And he said to them (that is His disciples), "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, <sup>12</sup> so that*  
*"they may indeed see but not perceive,*  
*and may indeed hear but not understand,*  
*lest they should turn and be forgiven."*<sup>6</sup>

Men and women are dead, captive, blind, deaf and cannot be taught spiritual things.

I Corinthians 2:14 Be careful with this verse. It doesn't mean what some people say that it means. <sup>14</sup> *The natural person (the man or woman who just has their ordinary nature) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

What it means is this: It doesn't mean when I speak about the Gospel, unconverted people don't understand what I am saying. They understand what I'm saying, it's not 'mumbo jumbo'. What it means is they won't, and can't, receive it. They can't see the wisdom of it; the power of it; the glory of it. It has no effect upon them. They are impervious to it. They can't understand the deep reality of

5 <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

6 Isaiah 6:9,10

it. They can't get to grips with it in a personal way. But they understand the grammar, the syntax used. They can't be taught spiritual things. They don't see it for themselves. If you're unconverted right now that's what your problem is. I'm speaking. Others are listening and they see it. But you can't see it for yourself.

That's exactly what John reported in 3:3. <sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Unless someone has a completely new nature, they can't even see spiritual things.

Are we getting the picture? Men and women are dead, bound, blind, deaf, cannot be taught. And they are incapable, unable to please God or of coming to Him.

Do you know that the normal man or woman is unable to come to God. Bible says so! Jesus says so! Let's go to Romans 8:7-8 <sup>7</sup> *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* <sup>8</sup> *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Cannot!*

Or as Jesus says in John 6:65 <sup>65</sup> *And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless (unless what?) it is granted him by the Father."*

So the picture is building up: Men and women are dead, bound, blind, deaf, can't be taught. Actually incapable of moving themselves in a God ward direction. They can't do it! They can't even start. They are like that from birth. Psalm 51:5 is King David's own admission of this.

<sup>5</sup> *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

He's not saying he was born out of wedlock, he's saying that when he was conceived he was already a sinner. From that moment. That's why people sin. Because they are sinners. That's why babies manipulate parents and show temper at an early age. Because they are sinners.

People have spots, because they have the measles, It's not the spots that give them the measles.

A very powerful verse is **Genesis 6:5**. People are sinners by nature and this is what sin is like: <sup>5</sup> *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, (now listen to this!) and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Everything is polluted with sin. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked says, Jeremiah 17:9 <sup>9</sup> *The heart is deceitful above all things,  
and desperately sick;*

*who can understand it?*

Above all things he said!

Now to close these twelve verses. Here is Jesus talking about the human heart. **Mark 7:20-23** It's amazing how wrong politicians can be. Some people are crim-

inals because of such and such factor in their environment. Because of that influence acting on them. Well obviously we realise that those things can aggravate the problem, but they are not the root of problem! <sup>20</sup> *And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."*

Now you can see why in 1618 when they looked at what Arminius' followers were teaching and when they looked at the Bible they couldn't square them together. It is total depravity. Every single part of a human is polluted, infiltrated, permeated, spoiled, defaced by sin.

- We close with the fourth sub-heading: We saw last week the importance of the First Point of the Compass, Total Depravity, and the teaching of it initially by the Reformers. And, so far this week, we have seen the Biblical basis of this teaching.

Now the **implications of this First point of the Compass.**

We may think about a person lying on a bed, in a hospital ward, say. It's an unconverted sinner, perhaps a man, woman or child. Not a Christian.

The Arminian comes to visit and says, "You're very ill. Oh you're very ill, but there's still some life in you. Oh look there's some medicine on the bedside table. Just stretch out your hand and take the medicine and you'll soon be better. There's the medicine. Take the medicine! But there is no response. The Arminian is in a bit of a fix. He tries all the techniques of persuasion that are known. Trying this one and that. Trying to get the sick person to take the medicine. Still no action.

Of course there's none. He's dead, blind, deaf, incapable of understanding, incapable of moving, and he's always been like that.

We're not surprised when men and women being offered the Gospel, turn it down. We don't expect the majority to do anything else. Because left to themselves they won't do anything else. You know why men and women reject Christ? Because they are the sinners the Bible describes them as being. That's what men and women are like, all day. Entirely corrupt. Entirely unable to want to be saved. Certainly incapable of saving themselves. They are polluted by sin at every point.

That's why men and women are indifferent to the Gospel. That's why we should cry over them. Pray for them. Because if the power of God doesn't raise them nothing else will. And there is nothing else in our hands to persuade God to do it, than prayer. We give ourselves to prayer. You believe what the Bible teaches then pray for the family member, that friend, that neighbour, that acquaintance. Pray for God's mercy on the lost men and women around us. If God doesn't give them life they are lost forever. Salvation, by its very nature, must come from God. The salvation of men and women, boys and girls depends on God.

God is God! He gives salvation or not as He pleases. Some who sit in Churches are nevertheless unconverted. Never acknowledged their sin; no love for Christ; no trust put on Christ; no enjoyment of Christ; no saving knowledge of Christ; never been to Christ; never called Christ; not loved the Cross; nor are 'in' Christ. Not a Christian! Hearing such a teaching as this, at least they have heard how desperate their problem is. They can't stir themselves to come to God or work themselves up to a religious frenzy, until they are strong enough to lay hold on Him. If anyone is going to be saved God is going to have to save them. What can be done according to God's promise is to submit the heart to God and sincerely say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The promise: (Romans 10:13) <sup>13</sup> ***For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

[2061]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen**

[Mention Olyott's full Sermon]

Romans 10:14-21

## The Missing Ingredient

Romans 10:17

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

Here is an experience all of us could imagine and understand. You are a visitor to your family's pantry – like I would be. You're that member of the family that has little to do with replenishing the items in that pantry.

But you have the desire for a 'jammy piece' as my father-in-law would have called it. A piece of bread and jam. For once you feel compelled to 'do for yourself'. So you search around to find the jam, the butter and a knife to serve them. So far so good. Now you have a bit of an idea where the bread is kept. You're now so ready to taste that bread and jam. But horrors! When you look where you expect to find the bread. There's none! How can you have your bread and jam when there is no bread: The missing ingredient.

In today's portion from Chapter 10 of Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul lists five essential ingredients that one must have to enjoy the feast of salvation.

In the previous two verses before today's reading, Paul has set the immediate context for our passage: the universality of the Gospel message. It's for Jew and Gentile – that is everyone, since if you were not a Jew you had to be a non-Jew that is a Gentile. (Verses 12 & 13) <sup>12</sup> *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.* <sup>13</sup> *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

In the larger context of Chapters 9-11, Paul is keen to make clear that God is still faithful to His promises even though most humanly descended Jews have not recognised Jesus as the promised Messiah and shown the faith that brought Justification to Abraham. Surprisingly the Jewish problem is compounded by the example of the Gentiles, where so many of them are acknowledging Jesus as the Christ (Messiah).

Paul explains both these phenomena: in Chapter 9 his explanation follows the principle of the Sovereignty of God – He saves whoever He saves. While in Chapter 10 he makes the 'responsibility of man' key to his argument.

That Paul chooses to put these two apparently contradicting truths together is instructive for us. Paul shows he believes both in God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility, in salvation. This should also be 'good enough' for us!

In Roman's 10:14-21 Paul shows that the Israelite's had all the ingredients for salvation, except one and it's consequence, collectively that of faith<sup>7</sup>.

Faith is the missing ingredient of the Jews who reject Christ.

This theme is developed in our passage in an unusual way: firstly by four rhetorical questions – at verses 14 & 15; then six Biblical quotations which follow (verses 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21); and two hypothetical objections that Paul answers that could be levelled at his teaching. Finally we will propose four practical applications of the truths contained in this passage.

1. **Four Rhetorical Questions:** In verses 14 & 15 the Apostle Paul lists the essential elements of salvation. In verse 13 he has already made clear that it is necessary to **call** on the Name of the Lord to be saved. But in order to do this you must believe in the One on whom you call. However belief comes through hearing about the One on whom you are to call. Hearing of that One requires that He be proclaimed. And for someone to be in a position to proclaim Him, they must be sent.

The Greek word<sup>8</sup> used which is translated as “preached” or “proclaimed” has a root meaning of being a herald. A herald is someone who was given a message and told to proclaim it. This points to Christian preaching being authorised by a ‘divine commission’ (Matthew 28:16–20).

The progression of actions is understood if we reverse their order: One is sent to proclaim a message; the message is then proclaimed; the message is heard; the message is believed; the one receiving the message calls on the One in whom they are believing. The recipe of salvation with it's five essential ingredients: **Sending, Preaching, Hearing, Believing and Calling.**

2. **Six Biblical Quotations:** As we read on we recognise that Israel possessed the first three of the above necessary ingredients, but did not respond by believing and calling on Christ (which together are the gift of faith by God's grace). This is demonstrated by six quotations from the Old Testament. (Verses 15 -21, where each, with the exception of verse 17, quote a specific text. Verse 17 provides a break where Paul pauses to summarise his argument so far.)

Verse 15 quotes Isaiah 52:7: This verse highlights the fact that the Jews had the good news proclaimed to them. In it's context of the times, when it was written, it refers to the messengers who brought news of the deliverance of the nation of Israel from the Babylonian captivity. However this passage together with all of Isaiah chapters 40 – 68 have always been understood to be Messianic: This deliverance from Babylon, just like the exodus from Egypt is a ‘type’ of the greater, spiritual, deliverance to be led by the Messiah Himself.

<sup>7</sup> The type of faith that Abraham had. Where his belief and confidence in the promise of God was such that he changed his life completely and left all that was familiar and went where he knew not, but where ever God would lead him. It is also instructive to note that the typical – that is unbelieving – Israelite of post Christ's life on earth, times has recognised their need of an Abraham who was in himself worthy of God's choice, by inventing the non- Biblical Midrash about him. And as an aside there is also a suggestion (by Jewish scholars) that the writer(s) of the Koran in their plagiarism did not understand the 5<sup>th</sup> Century additions to God's word – the Midrashim – as being separate from the Word. Having copied some or all without that distinction.

<sup>8</sup> Kēryssontos: from the root verb, *kēryssō* (“to herald”) refers to *preaching the Gospel as the authoritative (binding) word of God*, bringing *eternal accountability* to all who hear it.

Verse 16 quotes from the very next Chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 53. (In fact there are only eight verses between the two quotes!)

This extract shows that the nation of Israel did not believe the report brought to them. They did not recognise the message of 'good news and glad tidings' in the Messianic description of a Suffering Servant as given in Isaiah 53. The Messiah they expected was the conquering hero who would restore the earthly Kingdom of Israel not a Saviour who by His suffering and sacrifice would bring the elect into the Kingdom of heaven. A kingdom unlike those examples (so common in Israel's history) of earthly ones that pass away but rather a spiritual, eternal and perfect one.

In addition Paul later (verse 21) insists that Israel's failure to believe was disobedience: It is rebellion against the God who has commanded us to believe on His Son.<sup>9</sup>

Verse 17 is the summary so far: It is the familiar formula: "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God". This is the foundational principle upon which expository<sup>10</sup> (verse by verse) preaching; evangelism and missions are all built.

There is more to be said about the next four quotes, shortly. First we briefly summarise their purpose: Verse 18, quoting Psalm 19:4, shows that Israel has **heard** the message.

Verses 19-21 (quoting Deuteronomy. 32:21; Isaiah 65:1; and Isaiah 65:2) show that Israel has **understood** the implications of a message of salvation that would be offered to Jew and Gentile alike. But Paul, in using them, is also responding to ...

3. **Two Hypothetical Objections:** Paul expects (or has already heard) these objections to the truth he has been preaching. Specifically the indictment of the nation of Israel for failing to believe on Christ. How common would these sorts of objections be?

In a common place example the doting grandmother is visited by her exuberant grandchildren. The parents of the Children are ready to discipline the children when they go too far. But granny will object: "They didn't hear what you said, don't be angry at them." and/or "They didn't know what you meant!"

Those are exactly the objections that Paul responds to in regard to the nation of Israel's unbelief.

Firstly: "Did they hear?" Verse 18 (Using Psalm 19:4): The psalm asserts that by God's general revelation His glory is known throughout the world through the declaration of His wonderful Creation. By a subtle change of tense ('goes' to 'has gone') Paul in his use of the Psalm in Romans 10 has transformed it, to refer to the special revelation. He says that the message of the Gospel **has** been proclaimed all over the (known) world. The implication then is that Israel

9 1 John 3:23. <sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. And the same idea: Romans 10:3. <sup>3</sup> For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

10 – a form of **preaching** that details the meaning of a particular text or passage of Scripture

should have known it! If the Gentiles are already hearing it in the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire, then surely the Jews among them, to whom the message was first preached, have heard it. Yes granny, “They did hear it!”.

Secondly: “Perhaps they heard but didn’t understand!” Paul’s response in verses 19-21. He quotes first from the Law and then the Prophets, to establish that the Jews did know the implications of the message that was now being proclaimed to the Gentiles.

Moses is speaking in Deuteronomy 32:21 which, in full reads:

*<sup>21</sup> They have made me jealous with what is no god;  
they have provoked me to anger with their idols.  
So I will make them jealous with those who are no people;  
I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

Then in verses 20 and 21, he quotes from two consecutive verses from Isaiah 65:1 & 2: The message couldn’t be any clearer: the contrast between the two responses of the Jews and the Gentiles.

In the verses in this section, Paul makes it clear that Israel’s problem was not that they didn’t hear the message or didn’t understand it. They were unable to plead neither deafness nor ignorance of the meaning, in the courtroom of God. They are guilty through being *disobedient and obstinate people*. For rejecting God’s clear message of salvation.

4. **Four practical Applications:** The key principle in today’s passage is the one found in verse 17 and spelled out logically in verses 14 and 15. The principle is that “the faith that God gives by His Sovereign grace comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of God.” This principle has at least four applications to us today! The first three to believers and a final one to unbelievers.

a) **The Centrality of the Word of God:**

This is important to those who preach and those who listen.

i. *The Preacher:* This is why we are so committed to preaching verse by verse through books of the Bible. If the faith that is granted, comes by hearing the Word from God then we must preach the Word, not ourselves, nor emotional stories, nor great illustrations, but by the Word! It has been said<sup>11</sup> “The reason we are doggedly committed to Bible exposition is because faith comes by hearing and that hearing is the Word of Christ. Not the latest ways to have a more satisfactory life, but about God and about His mercy, and His grace, and about the Lord Jesus Christ.

ii. *The Listener:* As Christians we must be committed to the regular reading and studying of the Word of God since we all want to grow in faith and faith is what the Word of God produces. D L Moody, a well known 19<sup>th</sup> Century evangelist once said, “I prayed for [the development of the outcome of] Faith, and thought that some day Faith would come down and strike me like lightning, But Faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, “*Now Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*” I had

closed my Bible and prayed for Faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and Faith has been growing ever since.”

b) **The Urgency of Evangelism:**

We must tell our family, friends, neighbours and co-workers about Christ! There is no other way of salvation for them, than to hear the message of the Gospel. If you don't tell them, who will?

c) **The Necessity of Missions:**

When William Carey, the 'father of modern missions', first tried to convince fellow Baptists that the Great Commission required them (not just the early disciples) to go out into all the world and make disciples, he was met with fierce resistance. At one meeting, an older pastor interrupted Carey's impassioned pleas, saying, "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine," The problem with this statement is that it just isn't true. It is true that God has an elect people who He has purposed to save out of all nations. But it is also true that God has purposed to save the elect through faith, by the message proclaimed by His representatives in the world, "Us!"

d) **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:**

This final point of application is for those who have not yet trusted in Christ. For them right now, or for them through you, later. Some of you have all the essential ingredients, but one. But you nevertheless will be doomed unless you finally do believe and call on the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Israel, you've heard and understood the message, but also like Israel, in your pride, you've refused to put all your trust in Christ alone for your salvation. There's a missing ingredient and that missing ingredient is faith. The belief in His name coupled with the urgent **call** to Him. "Lord have mercy on me a sinner!" Obey the Gospel command of 1 John 3:23. <sup>23</sup> *And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ . . . .*

[2197]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen**

Romans 10:1-17

## The Gospel: Nature of Faith and Preaching

Romans 10:17

***17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

Winning this poor world for Christ: *He who wins souls is wise* (Proverbs 11:30 NKJV)

We begin with Romans 10:13-15. Listen again to these words: <sup>13</sup> *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

<sup>14</sup> *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?* <sup>15</sup> *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!”*

From this passage we consider three words:

Verse 13. To pause, to stop and consider again the wonder of the Gospel. <sup>13</sup> ***For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*** The first of the three key words to consider is, ***saved***.

We all must know and acknowledge that there is a God in heaven! Your conscience knows that. You know that. Your problem is not that you don't know about God. Your problem is that you know too much about God, from the wrong sources. There is a God in Heaven!

And this God is angry with His world. Of course He is because this God is perfectly pure and men and women are not as He made them. They are no longer pure. God is perfectly right and just, but the men and women he made have become dishonest and deceitful. They are altogether self-seeking.

We also should be reminded that God is infinite. Everything about God is 'without measure'. Therefore if God is angry with a man or a woman – as He is – then that anger cannot be weighed. It cannot be measured. There is no height or length or depth of years to it. It is infinite fury. Men and women are ruined. They're ruined by their impurity, They're ruined by their rebellion. They are ruined by what they are. They are ungodly. They weren't created that way; they've become that way; they remain that way; they choose to remain that way; and they can't do any thing about it.

Their whole nature is twisted and perverted.

But, although the anger and fury hangs over all men and women. And although all men and women deserve to go shrieking to hell. The Bible constantly tells us that cer-

tain men and women, young people and boys and girls are to be saved from the awful ruin of their sins. It's only in the context of God's great holiness and our impurity that we can understand this word, **saved**.

It's only when we look at God's fury because of the way we live, and the people that we are, that we can have a great sense of relief in our hearts when we come across this word, *saved*. Certain people really are saved from the consequences of their sins. They are saved of course because Jesus Christ lived the life that they have never lived. His life lived for them! And because Jesus Christ the infinite, when He was punished for the sins of others, it was an infinite punishment that was quenched on that Friday afternoon.

They are saved because the death they deserved to die: Jesus Christ died it! They are saved because Jesus Christ is a Living Saviour. Who is now back in the presence of His Father, where His very presence, speaks for the people who are united to Him.

There are men and women who are saved! Are you one of those saved people? At the beginning of the Methodist movement in England they put the same question this way: "Do you know that God has forgiven you all your sins?"

Do you know that? Are you one of those saved people: you know that all that anger which you deserve, has fallen on Jesus Christ. You know that the life that you could never have lived. He lived it for you. And you are looking away from everything else and only to Jesus Christ – clinging to Him, relying on Him – as your Saviour. Are you one of those saved people?

Now, still at verse 13: "**everyone** who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." The word **everyone**. (or *whoever* in the KJV) Now God stands before the world through the Scriptures, speaking to us by His Holy Spirit and He uses a great liberal, abundant, inviting word, *everyone*. Throughout Church history that word's meaning has provided the greatest possible comfort to men and women. If your name were 'Jack Smith', say, and it actually said on the page of the Bible "If Jack Smith *calls on the name of the Lord he will be saved.*" You couldn't really have much assurance. Because there might be another Jack Smith or possibly millions of Jack Smith's. You could never know for certain, even if your very name was there, that the promise was for you.

So God, Himself in His mercy and kindness, uses this enormous, all-embracing word, *everyone*. He therefore opens the door of salvation to all people everywhere. In other words there are no exclusions.<sup>12</sup> In some Countries, where there might be a certain minority, who are excluded from the privileges of the majority, simply because of the group they belong to. But as the Gospel is introduced to the world, there are no exclusions. Class, colour, accent, education: no exclusions!

<sup>12</sup> As there would be if you wrote a will intending everything you had, to be left to you wife, but did so by making a specific list of all the things you could think of, rather than using a comprehensive word like everything (or whatever). The list could have omitted something!

The Gospel does not go into the world with exclusions. It stands 'face to face' with every man and woman, and it says, *everyone* – all sorts of people! Whoever you are. If you are illiterate – you can't read or write – you're still in the promise. If you don't understand everything about it, you're still in the promise. The invitation is still there, before you, simply by being a man or a woman. If you are young you're still there. If you're old and given up hope of ever being right with God, the promise is still for you. If you've wandered far away from spiritual things and you've got a thousand memories 'in the cupboard' of your mind that you'd rather forget, the promise is still before you. ***"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

It's a tremendous word in a wonderful Gospel! There is no message like this.

And look at how simple it is. Look at the other key word: *everyone who **calls** on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Man-made religion always makes things complicated. You've got to light the right candles; recite certain prayers; stand in a certain attitude at a certain place at a certain time, dressed in certain clothes and do certain things.

The Gospel is divine. It comes from God. The promise is as rich as God is. The promise is to those that **call on the name of the Lord**.

The smallest child calls out to its mother. He knows what call means. Neighbours call to each other as they pass each other in the street. We call when we want to attract someone's attention. And we call when we want to warn people of danger. We understand the word. Everybody in the world understands it!

And this great Gospel tells: that's how people are saved.

Whoever you are, whatever you've done, wherever you've come from: you may be saved from the anger of God. You may be saved from eternal punishment. You may be saved from being excluded forever from the presence of God. You may be saved from what you deserve: **By calling on the name of the Lord**.

The *Name of the Lord*, means: *God as He has revealed Himself to be*.

God has revealed Himself to be the Saviour of all who have turned their backs, not only on their sin, but also their **good deeds**! Will you turn away from all that. Stop looking at yourselves. Will you come to Christ and call out, "God be merciful to me – or any other word that will express your need – a sinner." And so we have a wonderful message for the world. There's no message like this one!

There's nothing so generous; so blunt; so promising; so assuring, as the Gospel which we have in Jesus Christ. So it's a sure word: *shall be **saved***; it's a universal word: **everyone**; and it's a simple word: *who **calls** on the name of the Lord*.

The difficulty is not in the message. The difficulty is getting the message to the people who need it. So now the second thing we need to do this morning is to look at the nature of faith.

There is this wonderful Gospel in the world. Verse 14: Look at the first two questions as we look at the nature of faith. <sup>14</sup> *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?* To be saved you've got to call. But before you call two other things have to happen: you've got to hear the Gospel (that is, know what the Gospel teaches); and you've got to believe that it is true. Then if you know the message and believe it to be true, then you may call. But it's as obvious as obvious can be that you can't call, if you don't believe. And you can't believe if you don't know.

So then faith is always: knowing; believing; and calling (or trusting).

So let's not take the word *hear* (that is know) too literally. Some may say, "I've never heard of it!" But what they actually mean is that they don't know anything about it. You've got to know the content of the message. You've got to have a definite understanding of what the Gospel is. Surely there is really no one like the man who was asked the following question: "What do you believe?". "Well I believe what the Church believed". "Yes but what does the Church believe?" "The Church believes what I believe." "What do you and the Church believe?" "Well, we both believe the same thing".

Some people are as vague as that!

To be saved you must know a minimum: you must know that God is; that God is the God of Scripture; God is a great and everlasting Spirit – without a body; that God is invisible; all knowing; able to do all His holy will; that we live in the presence of this God – because He is here and everywhere else all the time as well. You must know that this God is holy and pure, such that even creatures that have never sinned still cannot look on His brightness. And that God is the giver of His law to His creatures and that the greatest of the law is to love Him with all your heart. Then you must know that God is just, such that if the greatest commandment is broken, it makes you the greatest sinner. Then if you are the greatest sinner, you deserve the greatest punishment. Not loving God with all your being is sufficient reason to be sent to hell.

But you also must know that God is surpassingly wonderful. That Jesus Christ is the everlasting Son of God, being totally God Himself, but who became a man. He was conceived in a virgin's womb and was born of her, being thus God and man in two distinct natures. Yet there is only one Jesus Christ.

That where you have failed, He was totally sinless and pure. He didn't deserve to die for any sins, but He did die and bear the punishment for sin. You must believe and know that He is risen from the dead. And that He is Lord and that He is God in the same sense as God Himself.

All that you must know.

And you must repent, acknowledging that you must repent. Repent simply means this: that you are ashamed of being what you are and you are determined, by God's grace, that you won't remain like that.

And you must believe: which means that you must not trust in anything, except Jesus Christ. That's all the things that a person must know.

So it follows if nobody can be saved without hearing (knowing), then the more often you hear the Gospel the better it is. There are some (many) in Churches, right now, who are not saved. Are you one of these? The very best thing you can do is come and hear the Gospel preached; hear it explained; hear it again and again; hear it once more; hear it another time. So that little by little its content enters into your mind and you become sure of what the Gospel is saying.<sup>13</sup>

The better you hear the Gospel the better it is for you.

There must hearing. There must be understanding. That's part of Faith.

Then there must be believing, since once you hear (know) you must move on to believe.

Another question: Do you believe – everything that you have come to know through the Gospel – to be true? Or are you still playing the hypocrite. Do you believe what you know to be true? *To him who is given much, much is required.* (Luke 12:48) If you believe all that you know, so far, to be true, you'll soon come to believe even things that up to this moment you don't yet know are true. Because to him who has, says the Bible, more will be given<sup>14</sup> (Matthew 13:12) If you choose to say, "I won't believe it even though I know it's true." God will propel you down that path of your own choosing. But if you say, "I'll believe all that I know to be true." (Even if at first this isn't very much!) Before long more things will be known and then believed. Little by little God will lead you to faith, to the point where you believe the whole Gospel.

Many things sound incredible, when we first hear them. So some people when they first hear the Gospel they dismiss it.<sup>15</sup>

Unconverted people find many things in the Gospel incredible, but if they allow themselves to gain more information, they can come to believe, by the grace of God. They may progress: at first incredible - it might be true – it could be true – it probably is true

13 In this Country there is no reason to be ignorant of the Gospel! There are Church libraries full of books; there are men and women in Congregations who should be able to tell the Gospel. There all sorts a media players, Christian bookshops and so on.

And you can make all these resources including your time in the 'pews' more effective in the same way as if it was announced that there was a 'surefire way' of making a thousand dollars in ten minutes or a cure for cancer: you would vigorously explore all opportunities; seek diligently everything available, arrive early to listen attentively and even take lots of notes. Wouldn't you? What about getting to know the Gospel. After all, eternity with God in heaven, is so much more desirable (essential) that money or a cure. Both of these are temporal – they must pass away! Life with God in heaven is eternal. While God's punishment in hell is also eternal!

14 *For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.* (Matthew 13:12)

15 Consider some children in a tropical climate. They are told that in parts of Europe children there can skate on rivers. Incredible! But should they come to know and believe that in some places it can get very cold and water freezes to solid ice. With this new knowledge and understanding they can begin to believe that what was incredible is true.

– and the day will come when you say, “It is true! I’ve heard the Gospel and I believe it to be true.”

BUT if that’s as far as you get you are still unconverted and you’re still on the road to hell! It said in verse 13, “*everyone who **calls** on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” Then in verse 14 <sup>14</sup> *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**?* It will not do to just hear (know and understand) and believe, those are only the preliminary steps which bring you to the point of faith. The real faith is when someone calls upon the Name of the Lord. He sinks his pride. He kills his self dependence and self trust and on the basis of what he knows and believes, he calls out to God to have mercy on him and to save him because of what Jesus Christ has done for sinners. That is the nature of faith!

[2591]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen**

Next week we continue with the implications for preaching. The second part of the passage.