

Responding with Heart and Mouth | Romans 10:9-10

Intro: Have you ever been in a situation where deliverance was **so** near, and yet inaccessible? I woke up Tuesday at 3:30 in the morning with excruciating pain and swelling in my left knee. It had been bothering me for a week and a half after some ambitious hiking, but at this point it was just constantly hurting. First thing in the morning, Duane Vincent was kind enough to drive me to the orthopedic urgent care in Bozeman, and I checked in about 30 minutes after the clinic opened (around 8:30). I hobbled into the waiting room and there was nothing I could do to get relief from the pain, no matter how I positioned myself in my chair. And then Duane and I sat there for an hour, watching as people came in after us and were quickly called to the back for their prearranged appointments. Throbbing pain radiated through my leg, and the source of my deliverance was fifty feet away—**and yet, until they ushered me back, relief was inaccessible to me!**

Some people feel that way about a right relationship with Jesus. They may understand what we got into last week, that a person doesn't have to travel high and low or perform enough righteous works to attain righteousness... They may understand that *the word of faith is near you*, and yet they still feel like it's so far away! There may be some here today who feel this way, or maybe they think of unbelieving loved ones in this way... as if where they are now and a right relationship with Jesus are an impossible distance away. **In Romans 10:9-10, God will bring home the reality that salvation is immediately available to every person who believes the Gospel!** It is not only near, it is also accessible... You aren't left in the waiting room with deliverance just barely out of reach! You're being invited to come and receive God's mercy.

Our text today makes crystal clear that salvation is readily available to any and all who trust the Savior, regardless of race, or background, or wickedness, or any other factor. So in Rom 10:9-10, we will see two elements of the immediate accessibility of salvation to all who believe—confessing that Jesus is Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead. How should this affect your Christian walk? It should not only bolster your own confidence in Christ and draw you into an even deeper trust in Him, but it should spark an evangelistic zeal in your soul to see loved ones and acquaintances reach out and grasp the gift of salvation so graciously extended to them! As we dive in, let's **read the text** and we'll **pray**.

In verse 8, Paul quotes Deut. 30:14 which says, “the **word** is near you.” What word is that? Paul tells us: *the word of faith which we are preaching!* Now, He will go on to explain the nearness of that word of faith—in other words, the gospel—by emphasizing that it demands only a simple response, and not some elaborate system of works. Let's look at that response in 2 parts:

I. Confessing that Christ is Lord (v. 9a, 10b)

Listen to verses 9-10 again, and take note of what stands out most in your mind. Later in the day or week, I want you to think back to these verses and chew on them more deeply. **Read.** Isn't God good to bring salvation so near to us?! Last week I read Spurgeon's conversion account, and the man who got up to bring the message at that Primitive Methodist church said it so well. He was commenting on Is. 45:22 — *Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* And he said: *My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, “Look.” Now that does not take a deal of effort. It ain't lifting your foot or your finger; it is just “look.” Well, a man need*

not go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man need not be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look; a child can look. But this is what the text says.

Every sinner separated from God can be made right with Him in a moment! As they are exposed to the gospel message, that Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners and rose to give new life, a simple response of trust and surrender immediately cleanses a lifetime of sins and transforms the person from the inside out. We must banish the thought that before God will accept us we have to clean ourselves up and become more acceptable before Him... The most religious person in the world is as unacceptable to God apart from Christ as is the most wicked and perverted sinner who has ever lived. No amount of cleaning yourself up can help one bit. But come to Jesus and He can cleanse you in a moment!

Paul continues to unpack the quote from Deut, as he refers again to the word of faith being as near as the mouth and heart. That context is incredibly important for understanding these verses, because our human tendency is to invent ways for us to *help God* save us. And even though Paul has been driving home the point that righteousness can **only be obtained** by faith alone and not by works, people have tried to make the statement “confess with your mouth” mean that faith alone is not saving unless there has been some public and vocal testimony given in some particular context. So let’s dive in to get at what matters most in light of how near salvation really is!

From verses 6-8, Paul quoted Dt. 30:11-14 to demonstrate that God has always “put the cookies on the lower shelf” so to speak. He hasn’t concealed the way to know Him from us or required a journey to the ends of the earth to find the truth about how to be made right with Him. Moses spoke of the word being near you, in your **mouth** and in your **heart**. Even for the ancient Jews, the right response to God’s self-revelation was always to confess and believe the truth from the depths of one’s soul! And so it is for us... The proper response to the gospel message is to confess it and believe it! Paul speaks of confessing with the **mouth** and believing with the **heart** because he’s still referring to Deuteronomy, but the emphasis is clearly on receiving the free gift of salvation by trust alone in Christ.

But think about how closely aligned our mouths and hearts are! What we truly think about the way things are will be made clear by what we say. It was the Lord Jesus who said: “Out of the heart the mouth speaks!” By the way, your speech can be a very helpful barometer for how you’re doing spiritually... Try to think about what you talk about most. Do you tend to complain or to give thanks? *That says something about your heart, doesn’t it?* Do you tend to talk about people’s good qualities or do you prefer to gossip about the failings of others? And related to our text, do you look for ways to bring the Savior up in conversation or have you kept your faith so secret that people would be surprised at your commitment to Christ? Paul is getting at that very thing—that your **inward faith** should be manifested in **outward allegiance**!

Confessing and believing here occur at the same time, when a sinner hears the good news that Christ died on the cross in the place of all who trust in Him and that He rose from the dead to defeat sin and death and to give the believer new life! Arnold Fruchtenbaum says: “Confession is not something one does later as part of gaining salvation. Belief in the heart brings righteousness and justification. The confession is made to God, and the content of this confession is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Faith has content, and the content is that Jesus is

Savior; this is what one confesses *the moment* he believes.” By the way, Paul flips the order of the phrases in v. 10, by saying putting belief in the heart in front of confessing with the mouth. In doing that he’s solidifying the point that he’s speaking of just the one action—receiving the good news by faith alone!

With all that as necessary background, let’s dive in to verse 9 and enjoy the fundamental content of our faith together. *If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord...* What does it mean to **confess**? The word Paul uses literally means “to say the same thing...” You’ve probably heard that in the context of confessing sin. 1 Jn. 1:9 says “If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” There, the idea is that by confessing our sins we are saying the same thing as God, we’re agreeing with Him that it is wrong to do the things we’ve done, and we’re acknowledging that we shouldn’t do them any more. In our passage, the word has less to do with confessing sin and more to do with agreeing with the basic tenants of the Gospel. We’re “saying the same thing” that the word of faith says!

This is where the concept of a creed comes in. God’s people had been taught to confess a particular creed all the way back in Dt. 6. Turn there with me for a moment. In Dt. 6:4-9, Moses speaks of the fundamental truth they were to confess often, known as the Shema. **Read.** *Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!* Even now, the Jewish people make that confession at least twice every day...unfortunately, they have not followed that belief to it’s glorious climax as God became flesh brought redemption through His blood. So the Jewish Christians in the early church were already used to confessing essential doctrine in short, memorizable creeds. We find one such creed in 1 Cor. 15:3-4 — *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.* Textual critics have dated this creed to as soon as two years after the resurrection itself, so this declaration is essentially as old as the church itself!

Another very early creed was made to summarize the Apostles’ teaching, and so was appropriately named The Apostles’ Creed. It is repeated in a lot of churches every Sunday, and while we don’t have that habit here, we certainly ascribe to what it says! *I believe in **God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in **Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in **the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* (universal) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*******

Now, unfortunately there are many so-called churches that would agree with everything in that creed but then they go on to deny the doctrine of justification by faith alone (as the Roman Catholic church does), or they reject the authority of the Bible and turn its teachings upside down (as progressive churches do). So one can agree with the Apostles’ creed in a sense and yet still not have a right relationship with Christ. But one cannot have a right relationship with Christ and knowingly deny the Apostles’ creed.

The creed we find in Romans 10:9 is a very concise, yet incredibly powerful phrase—only two words in the original Greek—Κυριον Ἰησου...**Jesus (is) Lord!** Before we can appreciate what

the Lordship of Jesus means, we need to be reminded briefly of who Jesus is. Turn with me to Phil. 2:5 (**Read v. 5-8**). He's the eternal Son of God, second person of the Trinity, who became a man, lived the perfect life, and died a substitutionary atoning death. The four Gospel accounts are meant to fill in the cracks of that summary to help you get to know the person of Jesus, and let me just encourage you, if you're new to the Bible or unfamiliar with it, get into one of the Gospels (my favorite is John) and study the life of Christ!

So we know who Jesus is, but what does it mean that Jesus is Lord? The word "Lord" had immense significance in both the Jewish and the Gentile world... For the Jews, the word "Lord" was used over 6,000 times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the name of God. One of the traditions that the rabbis came up with supposedly to protect God's people from taking His name in vain, the Jews stopped saying "Yahweh" and used the word "Adonai" when speaking Hebrew or "Κυριος" when speaking Greek—both of which are translated as "Lord." So no Jewish person could genuinely confess that Jesus is Lord unless he had truly believed the Gospel, because they would be acknowledging the deity of Jesus. For the Gentiles, the word was used frequently for the pagan gods they worshiped or for the Emperor (who was worshipped as a god himself).

Whether you came from a Jewish or Gentile background, then, the statement *Jesus is Lord* powerfully acknowledges (as one author puts it) that Christ "shares the name, nature, holiness, authority, power, majesty, and eternity of the one true God." This is what Phil. 2 goes on to assert. If you're still turned there, look at verse 9 (**read 9-11**). To confess that Jesus Christ is Lord is to profess your allegiance to Him as God and King of the Universe! There is no one or nothing with greater authority or power or glory, but He Himself has come to have first place in **everything!** Do you believe that Jesus is Lord? Can we confess this together? Say it with me: *Jesus is Lord. Amen.*

If Jesus really is Lord, how should it affect your life? It should affect **everything**, right? There are many people today who have made "Christ is Lord" or "Christ is King" a political mantra, but then you listen to how they talk and what they say, and there's nothing Christ-honoring in it! We must personalize this truth, bring it home to our own lives—*Jesus is my Lord!* And if Jesus is **my** Lord, then I need to bring my whole life into alignment with that reality. Let this question linger on your mind and meditate on it: *Is Jesus truly the Lord of your life?* (**pause**) Jesus challenged the crowds who followed Him in Luke 6:46, saying, "Now why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" That's a sobering question! It's easy enough to say *Jesus is Lord*, but it's a different matter to live in light of it. Paul's prayer for the church in Col. 1:10 helps us in our pursuit of submitting to Jesus as Lord: (you need to be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding) *so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and multiplying in the full knowledge of God.*

Is it your primary goal in life to please the Lord in all respects? Examine your calendar... Does it show a dedication of your time to communion with and service to the Lord? Open up your bank book... Does the use of your resources show that you prize the Lord and His kingdom? Look at your conduct... Do you care about obeying the commands of God's Word, or are you picking and choosing like Scripture is a buffet? Evaluate your priorities... Is your life on a trajectory of glorifying Jesus, or are you driven primarily by your own pursuits and ambitions?

Ask the Lord today to help you re-order your life so that your life lines up with your profession! May it be your all-consuming desire to please the Lord Jesus in all respects!

The outward response in accepting the gospel is to confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord. It signifies a recognition that we are to be totally devoted to Christ and to submit to His will for our life without question. Now let's look at the inward counterpart, how we receive the gospel in the core of our being:

II. Believing that God raised Him from the dead (v. 11-13)

Intimately connected with the creed that *Jesus is Lord* is the call to believe that God raised Him from the dead. In fact, it is the very resurrection of Christ that the Apostles highlighted as the fundamental demonstration of the Lordship of Christ. In His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated that sin, sickness, and the Devil did not have power over Him... And in His resurrection, He proved that not even death had power to keep Him in the grave! He is Lord over all creation, and over life and death. Peter powerfully connected the resurrection of Christ to His Lordship at the end of his sermon at Pentecost. **Look at Acts 2:32-36. Read**, emphasis on v. 36. This Jesus whom you crucified has been demonstrated to be Lord and Messiah by God's raising Him from the dead! Paul made a similar statement in the introduction to this letter. Listen to Romans 1:4 - (speaking of Jesus) *who was designated as the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

How awesome is Jesus, who stared death down His entire earthly life?! He was born so that He might die... And every step toward Jerusalem drew Him closer to His appointment at the cross. He told His disciples that He would be killed, but He also said that no one takes His life away from Him—instead, He laid it down willingly! He went on to say that if He lays His life down, He has the power to take it back up again by being raised from the dead on the third day. No other person had pulled one over on the grave. God had raised a few from the dead throughout Scripture, but those people went on to die a second time! Jesus was raised in an imperishable and incorruptible body, never again susceptible to death's cold grip.

Now then, why does Paul emphasize the resurrection of Christ here as the object of our faith, when our gospel proclamation tends to focus in on the sacrificial **death** of Christ? That's a very important question, and as you share the good news with others, I don't want you to leave either reality out! We need to help others understand the bad news first, that every one of us is facing eternal judgment from God because of our sins, and we are completely unable to earn our way into God's good graces. Then people can appreciate the good news itself, that that's why Jesus came! He lived the perfect life and then suffered and died as our substitute. God treated Jesus as if He had committed our sins so that He can treat us as if we had obeyed like Jesus always had! But we must not stop there! Having died in our place, Jesus then rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, not only to prove that God had accepted His sacrifice but also to illustrate the new life He gives to those who trust in Him! When people give their lives to Jesus, He gives them new life by the power of His resurrection! We now no longer are enslaved to the old way of living, stuck in sin and constantly at war with God. Now we get to walk in newness of life, because Jesus rose again, and brought us up with Him!

But why is Paul focusing on the resurrection here, without mentioning the death of Christ? Right in line with the previous statement, that is—*Jesus is Lord*—Paul continues to refer to our

faith in the **person of Christ**, and not now emphasizing His redemptive work. Why is that? The foundation of our hope, the grounds of our confidence, the reason we can be made right with God, is because Jesus bore the wrath of God in our place on the cross. But the reason all that was done is to bring glory, honor, and praise to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ! Our justification is not the reason we exist...we exist to worship Jesus, and our justification is what enables us to do that! Paul has spent 9 chapters showing **how** Jesus has made us right with God, and here he reminds us **why**—because Jesus deserves our love, and worship, and submission, and our lives! We don't just believe in the truth that Christ has rescued us from hell—we believe in the person of Jesus Himself! That's what Paul told the Philippian jailer to do when asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer: *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your house!*

The atoning death of Jesus is of critical importance...and so is the resurrection of Jesus! Leon Morris makes it clear: "It is at the cross that God did his saving work, but Paul does not believe in a dead martyr but in a living Savior. Not only did Jesus die for our sins but God raised Him, triumphant over all the forces of evil." Do you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead? All the evidence points to an empty tomb—even Christ's enemies had to pay off the guards to keep them from telling the truth about that resurrection morning! If you mentally assent to the fact that he really rose, has that led you to then place all your trust in Him and to declare that Jesus Christ is **Lord** to the glory of God the Father?

There are uncountable masses of people who have acknowledged that Jesus came, died, and even rose again, and yet they have not appropriated His saving work for themselves. The story is told of a man named George Wilson who in 1830 was convicted of robbing the U.S. Mail and was sentenced to be hanged. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson, **but he refused to accept it**. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall, who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." How many do you know who have heard of the pardon God offers through Jesus and yet they refuse to accept it and keep living apart from Him? Just agreeing with the facts of the Bible isn't enough...

But what does it say? *If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved!*** It's not that you *might* be saved, or you *could* be saved... You're not in the waiting room hoping that someone will call you to the back to get relief. The relief is immediately available, salvation is at hand! Repent and believe the Gospel! Are you burdened by your own sinfulness this morning? Have you tried to find peace by cleaning yourself up or doing some good things? Maybe you've tried being religious in an attempt to soothe your troubled conscience. But none of those things can save you. Trust the Lord! Submit to Him as your Savior and Master, and He will give you peace with God and new resurrection life in union with Him!

Dear Christian, are you living in light of the truths you hold most dear? Is it clear from your way of life that Jesus is your Lord? Has the resurrected Savior won your heart and captured your allegiance? Keep trusting Him and His finished work on your behalf, and now live in the marvelous light of His lordship! Let's pray, and we'll dismiss with a song.