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December 6, 2015

ROMANS 9:1-10:13

Romans Series: How God Changes People

Romans 9. We teach the Bible verse by verse. We go through it, taking the passage and trying to understand what God is saying in the passage. Today's passage is a passage filled with wonder. It's a passage that will take us to the edge of our human comprehension. Because we're going to talk about the sovereignty of God.

Whenever we start talking about the sovereignty of God we can only understand so much about who God is. And so today you will get to the end of your comprehension. You will say, "I don't get this." That moment is a very important moment. Because then you realize how big God is. Now some of us can go farther along that path than others. Some of us are more intellectual or more astute or more studious. But we all get to the end somewhere where we say, "Wow. This is so big. I need to understand this."

Now Paul is writing to the Jewish Christians in Rome and they have a problem. You see all the talk up till now in the book of Romans is about God choosing people now to accept Him as their Lord and Savior so they can be part of His kingdom. But the Jews are thinking, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. We are already God's chosen people. How does that tie into the Abrahamic covenant that God gave us? We're the chosen people. Now we have these other people being chosen. How does that all fit together?"

He's going to use this sovereignty of God, the election idea, to help guide us through this question. So you want to be listening for that question and understand what God is going to do in it. When we understand the sovereignty of God, that piece of this, here's what's going to happen inside of your heart when you get this picture. You're going to have more trust. You're going to have more peace inside of your heart and you're going to be a more grateful person because you see how God is orchestrating events and how He's sovereign.

Look at with me at Romans 9. Let's start in verse 1. We're going to take it all the way up to 10:13 today.

Romans 9:1 – *I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit.* So what he's saying here is a statement of integrity. I want you to understand that what I'm about to say is true.

Notice that he relies on his conscience here. Paul's going to do this a number of times in his writing because the conscience is very important to Paul. In fact as Paul is teaching and as we

see in the Bible, we look at the word conscience, we see that the conscience has four promptings inside of us according to the Bible.

One is it prompts us to do the right thing. Secondly it prompts us to deal with wrongs, guilt. To deal with wrongs properly. Thirdly it prompts us to have integrity. This verse points that out. He says *I speak the truth—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit*. This idea of the conscience is something that prompts us in this area of integrity. And you know that. When you're doing something that even looks a little dishonest your conscience bothers you and that's what Paul is saying here. I'm speaking the truth and the conscience confirms that. And the fourth area of the conscience is caring about others. That tug you have inside that you know that person needs some help; I'm going to do something there. That's the work of the conscience.

Oh so much more about the conscience. I encourage you to do a study on it. I have and it's just a fascinating study.

Verse 2 I think describes some of us in our own lives. He says, *I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel*.

You know people who are not saved, people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Your heart just goes out to them because you know there would be so much more potential for them in their lives. If they would just trust Christ in their lives it would move them to a new dimension to deal with the current problems they're experiencing in their lives. God could do some amazing things. He brings us into a church where we get fellowship and further stimulation in that. It's just such an amazing thing. When Jesus Christ comes into someone's heart it changes them.

Now the focus of our study as we're going through the book of Romans is how God changes people. We're just going through this book and understanding it. And what we're going to see today is that the greatest thing that can change a person is that they accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and as their Savior.

So if you're here today and you don't know God in a personal way, I want to invite you to accept Him as your Lord and Savior. It changes who you are. It moves you to this next level of potential in your life because God created you and He wants to do this amazing thing inside.

Now Paul is going to take us through a process here to understand this. But the first thing he's saying here is I just wish that all Jews knew Jesus Christ. I just wish that every one of them came to know the Lord. The same way we feel as we are thinking about those people that don't know the Lord.

Now we come to a problem. The Jews have this problem. What do we do about the promises that were made to Israel? That's really what Paul is going to address here. Are the Jews already saved? Because God chose them. Is God done with the Jews and maybe now He's working through the Christians? So they're trying to figure all this out. How does this new understanding of Jesus as this new peace, new for us, not necessarily new in the Old Testament because the Old

Testament was looking forward to that, but new for us in understanding this information, what does this do for the Jewish people and the race of Israel? That's the question. Is God still committed to Israel?

Paul makes it very clear that first of all He has not changed His commitment to Israel. Secondly, that every person who is Jewish, whether Jewish or not, needs to step to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. That's what we're going to see in this passage.

Let's go to the next verse. This is verse 4. He's talking about the Jewish people and he's saying how important they are in God's kingdom program. This is going to affect your politics, your commitment to the Jewish nation. This is going to affect your view of Jewish people.

Is God still committed to the Jews? Notice verse 4. It says, *Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory.* That's the *shekinah* glory. Remember in the Old Testament the *shekinah* glory would come down onto the people of Israel around the tabernacle and would speak to them through the *shekinah* glory.

Theirs is the divine glory, the covenants. The covenants were the promises that God gave. The Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the Mosaic covenant that God made with the people. They had those, *the receiving of the law* (they're the ones who were the recipients of the Ten Commandments and the other laws), *the temple worship* (where people would come and they would understand reconciliation through sacrifices) *and the promises* that God made to them.

Verse 5: *Theirs are the patriarchs* (that's Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph), *and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah* (Jesus was a Jew is what he's saying there), *who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.* In other words that's the end of that issue.

God still has a very important place in His heart for Israel. So let's not move that out of the picture and think that somehow we've substituted something new here. Paul is making it clear in Romans 9:1-5 that the position of God's chosen people is secure. They are the people of God. That's not changed.

But he's going to go on now and we're going to see that even in the Old Testament and the New Testament it's important that faith accompany their bloodline. It's not enough to have the right bloodline. It's not enough to have the right genes. It's not good enough, we'll see, to be religious or to have a righteousness that comes by the law. They needed something else in the Old Testament, we need something else in the New Testament, and that is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

So look at the last verse where we're going. I want you to see this last verse in verse 13 of chapter 10. It says, "*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*" I want you to see that's a human act. In other words, every one of us needs to call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and we'll be saved. I want you to see that's where we'll be going.

But before we get there we're going to go through some election here, understanding what election is and how God has predetermined things and so on. You need to understand both of

those concepts. God has chosen these people. So you might ask the question, if God has chosen these people, then what's the deal with the Bible? Is the Bible no longer valid?

Well Paul's tracking us in our logic, so that's what he says in verse 6. *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. What he's saying is not everyone who has the bloodline is really the people of God. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children.*

So what he's saying is he's about to help us see that Abraham's children are something more than just being a bloodline. They have something and that something is going to be faith in God, righteousness by faith.

He's going to make a case for this as a lawyer would, going through the passage. He's going to make a very important statement at the very end of our passage. In 13, 14 or starting in 9, 10, and so on he's going to talk about the importance of everyone's personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

But now we have to address the promise of God because God made a promise to Abraham. It's a beautiful promise that He made to him and said, *"Through you all of the nations of the earth will be blessed. I'm going to make your descendants as large as the sands of the seashore, the stars in the sky."*

He didn't even have any kids. So Abraham, trying to help God out, has a child through the handmaid because Sara couldn't get pregnant. And that child was Ishmael, thinking that that would be the one. He's going to help God out through Ishmael come the promise.

But God had something else planned and so, well, let's continue on. The story continues in verse 7. *On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."* Not Ishmael. Isaac. *In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children.* Not everybody who came from Abraham are God's children here. Ishmael isn't part of the chosen ones. Okay? It's Isaac. *But it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.* So God is picking and choosing as He goes through here. That's the idea. *For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."*

You want to talk about God's promise? Okay. Let's talk about those. His choice to choose the family of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph – we can talk about that, God's promises. But in order to do that, in order to understand that, we have to understand something about how God picks out. His word is the word *election*. It's the word going to be used in our passage here, election, to describe how He picks out these people. He chooses people to be saved. So I'm going to talk about election for a moment because I want you to understand, I want you to feel comfortable about it.

Obviously Paul feels very comfortable about election as he's sharing about it. He chooses the line of the Messiah. If we were to draw it out we'd see that we've got Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah now. Through the line of Judah comes the Messiah. But I want you to see all the white

ones. They're not the ones that are chosen. They are not the ones that are selected. God has elected or chosen and picked out those ones and that's where the line is going.

Let's read about it, where we get the word election. It's in the next couple verses. Let me read the passage there and then I'll explain it to you.

Verse 10: *Not only that, but Rebekah's children.* So now we're down here – line of Abraham, now we're down to Isaac and Rebekah. So Ishmael was excluded, Isaac was chosen. We have Isaac and Rebekah and notice what it says. Rebekah's children *were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand* (in other words there's nothing they could've done either way): *not by works but by him who calls.* In other words it wasn't anything they did. The one who calls, that's God, He's doing the initiating. He's the one doing the calling. It's based on Him.

She was told, "The older will serve the younger." You wouldn't expect that to take place. Usually it's the older who's the serving and the younger one serves the older. But in this case *the older will serve the younger.* God picked that out.

Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Alright. We've got to stop here. Because you're going to get distracted right here, right? Because the word *hated* is there. If you grew up in a family like mine, we didn't use words like 'stupid' and 'hate.' They just weren't part of our vocabulary because if you say 'hate' then it's really bad because you hate someone. So when it says he loved Jacob and hated Esau, you go, "Whoa, whoa, whoa." Now you're totally distracted by this.

So let's take a tangent for a moment and I want you to understand what this idea of hated means and then we'll come back to the passage, what we're trying to teach today. But otherwise if I don't stop here, you're not going to get the truth that's in the passage.

The idea of hated here is a comparison that I love and I choose this thing so much. This choice that I made is so important it's as if I hated the other things. So it's a statement of comparison related to choice. That's what he's saying here.

The same idea is used in the New Testament because in the New Testament Jesus says, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate, father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters -- yes, even their own life -- such a person cannot be my disciple."*

Does that mean we should hate our family? No. That's not what it means. He talks about caring for your family elsewhere. What he's talking about here is that when you come to making this choice it is so valuable that anything else looks like hate compared to it. So it's a comparative term used to describe how important the choice is.

Okay I'm done with the tangent. Let's go back now because you've forgotten everything that was in the verses. So let's go back to verse 11, pick it up there. *Yet, before the twins were born*

or had done anything good or bad (so they couldn't earn anything. It wasn't based on their actions)—*in order that God's purpose in election* (His determination, His choosing) *might stand: not by works* (not by anything they did) *but by him who calls* (that God's doing the work, it's based on His calling of His character)—*she was told, "The older will serve the younger,"* and so on.

That's what it says and so we need to talk about this idea of election. Election implies it's fixed, it's determined in advance. It's based on God's will, not anything else. Not based on their works.

Now when you see that and you start thinking about that, if you're like me you start thinking, "Wait a minute," – and these are the words that come out of my mouth, maybe they come out of yours too – "that's not fair." Right? Don't you feel like saying that? That's not fair. Why? Because some are going to be chosen, they're going to go to heaven. Others are not going to be chosen and they're going to go to hell. If it's based on God's character and not based on anything they did, then I feel like saying that's not fair.

Paul knows that. That's why he goes to the next verse. He's tracking with us and he says in 14, *What then shall we say? Is God unjust?* So Paul's going to answer that question now. Is God fair? Is God unjust? *Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*

There's several things we're going to see here. The first thing I want to point out is that it's not amazing to me that God chooses some. It is amazing to me that God chooses any. It's not amazing to me that He doesn't choose any; it's amazing to me that God chooses a few, chooses some. That's what's amazing to me. It's based on His mercy because none of us deserves a relationship with Christ. None of us deserves salvation. So the fact that God chose some is based on His mercy and His compassion, first of all. That's the first thing he's saying.

Now is God really in control about who He picks and how He's orchestrating history and so on? Well in order for us to understand this fully as Paul wants us to, he takes us to an Old Testament example of Pharaoh. So look at that with me in verse 17.

For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Pharaoh was the guy that wouldn't let the Israelites go. Verse 18: *Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

That is probably the most succinct statement of God's sovereignty in the whole Bible. Right there, verse 18, describing the election of God and what it is. You can't sugarcoat it. You can't change it.

When it comes to Pharaoh who could have bowed his knee at any point, we look at the story. If you go back and look at the story of Pharaoh, the idea of hardening his heart is mentioned twenty times. Ten times it says Pharaoh hardened his own heart and ten times it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Very interesting how that dynamics played out in the Old Testament. It's

interesting that God used Pharaoh to demonstrate His power, designed him and created him for that purpose.

Does that mean that Pharaoh didn't have a choice? I think that would be our mistake. When we start thinking about it in those terms then we come to this thing – “well it's not fair if the person doesn't have a choice how could they be held accountable.” And that's where we get into trouble.

There are some churches that have this fatalistic attitude about it. They don't even have altar calls. We have altar calls at our church because we believe people need to choose to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. So we invite people to come forward and go to prayer counselors and to ask Jesus Christ to come into their lives. That's what we believe and that's what we do.

There are some churches who are on the extreme with election and they say, “We don't need altar calls because the elect are going to come. They're going to show up.” But I would suggest that if we're only looking at election, we're missing a key component here and we have to understand what that question is. How could God hold someone responsible? Isn't that a good question? Well I'm asking that question and that's why I'm glad Paul is tracking me here.

Verse 19 he asks the question for me. *One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?”* How can you hold someone accountable if they're not given any choice?

Paul's first response in verse 20 is this: *But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God?* First of all, be careful who you're talking to is the idea here. But the idea that we're a human being helps us understand this a little bit more. Because what we're going to see in the passage here is that somehow in the midst of God's sovereignty, the fact that His fixed, elected, chosen people, He's done all of that, in the midst of that, somehow He takes the free will of man into consideration and only the people who choose to accept Jesus Christ become the elect. Somehow God not only chooses people from the foundation of the world, but He also requires that a person make a choice in their own heart. There's a human element to this that's very important. That's what Paul's going to lead us to.

In fact I want you to track from here to the end of the passage how many times Paul talks about *you must believe* or you've got to *have faith*. I want you to see it because Paul doesn't have a problem with this election stuff. We have lots of problems with election stuff because we only emphasize one side or the other. But if we understand both parts then we understand that God does this. He's the one who's able to put this together.

Let's go on. *“Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?*

I want to be of Oz,” the wood flower said. “But God has made me a plate on the table where I get dirty all the time.” You can't complain the household you live in or the genes that you have that cause you to maybe.... You can't complain about those things. God designed us in a very

particular way. You can't say, "Oh I wish I had Superman genes or I wish I had something else." God put you where you are, so we need to respond in kind to what God is doing.

Verse 22: What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory.

So God is doing all these things. And yes, His wrath will be demonstrated by people who reject Him and His glory will be demonstrated by those who accept Him. That's looking at it from the human perspective.

If we look at it from the God perspective, the election perspective, God picks people that are going to be chosen of His. That's the idea here. God is big. We don't know all of His ways.

Now I want to help you understand the difference here. The 'what' and the 'how' is very important. The 'what' we can get, the 'how' we can't. The 'what' is God elects people and the other what is everybody has got to choose. That's the 'what'. I get that. It's two different things. I understand everybody's got to choose and I understand that God has elected people. I get that.

If you ask me how, then I've got a problem. Because as soon as you ask the question, how can God put those things together, that seem to be an antithesis, then my brain just can't get wrapped around that. Because you take me to the edge of my comprehension and it's because I'm finite.

Somehow God in His infiniteness is able to not only comprehend it, but practice this so that it's not unfair to God. He can see it all, so He can elect people and hold them accountable and all of that fits together in an amazing way inside. God is outside of time. He's outside of space. He's outside of the limitations of our mind. We are human beings that come to this problem where we can't understand it, but God can understand it, so the 'how' question is a challenging question.

I remember when I was in seminary I really wanted to get this. You know in seminary we wrap around this question more than just in thirty minutes on a Sunday morning. We're just wrapping around this the whole class, talking about how God's sovereignty and I'm trying to understand it. It is really complicated trying to figure all this out. How can we do this.

I was relating this idea of theology we were studying to the assistant pastor at my church and we were talking about it. He said something to me that I really appreciated and I think about it every time I think about how I can't comprehend this. He said, "It's like this big pool of water – the sovereignty of God, the responsibility of man. Everybody jumps in the water. Some people go really deep and other people are just swimming around in there. But everybody gets wet."

I would suggest that's the case. You can go really deep in this subject or you can take it on the surface, but we're all going to get wet. When I mean wet, it's all going to affect our lives.

So if you fully understand the sovereignty of God, you're going to be driven to trust Him more. You're going to be so grateful for what He's done for you in your life. You're going to trust Him

more and if you're over here understanding the responsibility of man, you're going to be doing everything you can to serve the Lord. You're going to be wanting to make your life conform to Jesus Christ, asking Him to do that work.

So there's a human part and the God part in this in the midst of this. That's why at the end of the passage where we're going to end today – *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Okay let's go back to the Jewish application about what God is doing. God is choosing people. Some are Jews, some are Gentiles. It's not the biology and the lineage that gets you in to this salvation. It's personal relationship with God. It's a second thing and the Romans need to understand this. So he's explaining this so they'll get it. God is calling all of us to make a personal decision for Him.

Verse 24. Let's read on. *Even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people (so now we're bringing the Gentiles in here. There's going to be some people that are His people that are part of His church, part of His family that are not Jews, he's saying); and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one."* In other words someone who's outside of the promise, some Gentiles are going to get grafted in like me. I've accepted Jesus Christ, so I'm one of those people he's talking about.

Verse 26 – *and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"* That's all of us who've accepted Christ. In other words the Bible teaches the very same thing in the Old Testament as it teaches in the New Testament. That's what he's going to say here. You have to have faith.

Verse 27: *Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.* So now we're back into Israel. I want you to know guys, it's only the remnant that's going to be saved here, not all of them, even though they're God's chosen people. So I think we're seeing a distinction here between the Israelite as a nation and the responsibility we all have to accept Christ.

Verse 28: *For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.* "It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah." You can look at people that you think are bad and terrible. It's only by God's grace that you're not like one of those people. That's what he's saying.

Verse 30: *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness (they did not have the Old Testament law of righteousness), have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith.* They had faith and that faith produced that righteousness that Christ gives to us in their lives. They didn't do anything. It's faith that gets you salvation. That's what he's saying there.

Verse 31. Let's go to the Jews now. We talked about the Gentiles there. *But the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness...* That is they did all the religion, the ceremony

as some people today do. They're just trying to be religious. They go to church and they give to the poor. They do all kinds of religious things. Notice this – *have not attained their goal*. It's not about religiosity. Salvation comes by faith.

Verse 32: *Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works*. You can't get saved by works. You get saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Very important message and that gets personal for each one of us. Now we're not talking about Jews and Gentiles, we're talking about you and me. It's not by works, not by things we do. It's by faith in Jesus Christ that we come before Him and we say, "Lord, I want you to be the Lord of my life."

They, the Jews, stumbled over the stumbling stone. That was Jesus Christ the cornerstone. They stumbled over Him. *As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame."*

Do you see the emphasis on belief? Paul didn't have a problem with sovereignty. He comes right there and says you've got to believe. God's election, man's belief – both important.

Let's go into chapter 10 here because he really nails it here and helps us understand the practical application.

Verse 1: *Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved*. They're not saved yet. They're only saved when they make this commitment to Christ each one of them. That's my prayer, he says. *For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge*.

You probably know people who are really zealous, they're righteous, they want to do the right thing. And you say, "Wow. God must accept that person." Well there's a lot of people who are highly motivated to do good things. That doesn't get someone into heaven. That doesn't provide for them this salvation. That's what he's saying here. *Their zeal is not based on knowledge*. That is the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior.

Verse 3: *Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own*. Man, this is like you and me. We try to be good because we want to impress God. We need to be good, but not to try to get our salvation, but in response to what God has done in our lives. We want to obey Him, we want to do what's right. We want to grow, but he's saying there's some of us that kind of make up our own religion. Isn't that what it says there? It says *they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness*.

Kylie and I were talking last night. She's writing a paper for school on world religions. She's dealing with Buddhism and we were talking about is Buddhism a religion. I said yeah. I think it's a religion. It's a human religion. It's described here in this passage – they create a righteousness of their own in order to fill this God vacuum that God created with them. So we have all these world religions that will help them to maybe satisfy that. But they don't. There really is only one true religion, as we might say. It is Jesus Christ and that relationship we have with Him.

Verse 4: *Christ is the culmination of the law.* That's going to be our solution here in verse 4. *Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.* It's there. Everyone who believes, you get the righteousness of Christ. It's not about you. It's about what Christ has done.

But we have to continue, verse 5. *Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).* See this heart thing doesn't require you to go to heaven to be saved. You have to go down in the depths like Christ did after the crucifixion. You have to go into the depths to be saved. It's a heart thing.

Now we're getting to the crux of the matter right here. Catch this. This is where we are. Verse 8: *But what does it say? "The word is near you.* And you've got to know right today the word is right near you. Each one of us.

The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim. And now we have the solution. This tells us how to get saved. If you're not saved today, this is what you do. The prescription for salvation is placed right in this passage in verses 9-10. *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," (that means He's the boss of my life). If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

When you recognize that Christ is the one who provides you with the righteousness and you believe that inside your heart and you're ready to communicate that with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you might be saved. Is that what it says? No. What does it say? *You will be saved.* Does it say you'll feel saved? No. It says *you will be saved.*

Are you one of the elect? Great question. Very important question. Are you one of the elect? The deciding factor determines if you want to know, because from looking at God's perspective you don't know who the elect are. Right? So when we do evangelism, we don't know who the elect are. We just go share Christ and we're hoping that people will respond. But the key factor that determines whether you are the elect or not is whether you have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. Then you are saved. You are one of the elect.

This isn't like whether I feel good or not or whether I've done wrong things or whether I get saved and then I make mistakes. This is about trusting God as your Lord and Savior. When you do that that is your human responsibility and that is the confirming factor that you are one of those elect people.

Verse 10 continues the idea. *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.* And then here's our

key verse. Verse 13 – *for, “Everyone (not just some people, not just the elect, for everyone) who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Now of course those are the ones who are going to elect. I mean God’s figured this out. It is His masterpiece. It’s His puzzle. He sees it from His perspective. We don’t see it from that perspective. All we can do is look up at God and say, “God, here’s what I’m doing in my heart. I want to give myself to you. I want to trust you.” And when we do God does that beautiful thing inside of our heart and it confirms the fact that we are one of God’s kids and He’s doing an amazing thing in our heart and life.

Wow. We need salvation. We need to understand election determination and the fact that God has everything under control, God’s sovereignty, because it does something inside of our hearts to enable us to trust Him in every area of our life. But we also need to recognize that we have a responsibility, and that responsibility in this passage is to first get saved. But then we have a responsibility to serve Him, to honor Him, to do things that will please Him and to grow in our relationship with Him. It’s just a powerful truth in this passage. I trust that you’ll be able to take this and apply it into your own life and use it as God might in your heart and life.

Would you stand with me? Let’s pray together.

I just want to say that today if God has touched your heart and He’s calling you, He’s drawing you, that you want to acknowledge that, you want to respond to Him, and you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. So we have counselors on the side that will pray with you this morning. We invite you to go up to one of them and they’ll pray with you about that or anything in your life. They’re there and available to you.

Let’s pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your great love for us. We thank you that you sent Jesus Christ to die for us so that we could have eternal life. We thank you that you’ve chosen us, picked us out, and we thank you that we can trust you. We thank you that you’re God and we’re not. So now, Lord, we ask that you would work in our hearts in areas that we need to be drawing closer to you and trusting you more in every area. In Jesus’ name, amen.