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# The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 10 Verses 9-21

Faith is never our contribution to our salvation. Faith is not something laying dormant in the caverns of our hearts that needs to be awakened. Faith is not something that needs to be activated or engaged through the spiritual frenzy of our religious endeavors. But instead, faith is created in us and sustained in us through the Word of God.

And so, one cannot confess Jesus as Lord without faith, and one cannot have faith unless they have heard the Word. And one cannot hear the Word unless someone preaches it to them. Therefore, as it has been said before, every person needs a pastor. Everyone needs a preacher to stand on the outside of a person's world and proclaim the Word into their world – into their ears. Since faith is not self-generated, and since the Gospel is not a part of mankind's inherent thoughts, everyone needs the external Word to be preached into hearts, minds, and ears, so that faith is not only created but sustained.

In Romans chapter 10, verses 14-21, the Apostle Paul establishes the chain of events that must happen for a

person to be saved. He presents them in reverse order. Let us reverse Paul's comments

- 1) God sends messengers – preachers.
- 2) Preachers speak God's Word.
- 3) People hear God's Word.
- 4) Faith is created through the preached Word.
- 5) People call/confess in the one they believe.

We can make a couple of simple observations from Paul's thoughts above. First, if the congregation's faith is dependent upon God's Word, it should be of utmost importance – to a church - that God's Word is correctly taught. Secondly, if the congregation's faith is dependent upon God's Word, it should be of utmost importance – to a church – that God's Word has a prominent position and voice in the life of the church. Thirdly, if the congregation's faith is dependent upon God's Word, it should be of utmost importance for the members to regularly gather around God's Word. And fourthly, since God's Word is what creates faith, it should be of utmost importance – to a church – that the Word of God goes forth for the sake of evangelism to the lost.

But how tragic it is that there are churches that are more concerned about fellowship, family ties, and prestige than God's Word being correctly taught. Without the Word of God, the church is nothing more than a common Rotary club. How tragic it is that there are churches who do not give God's Word prominence in their church, as if God's Word is an afterthought. When God's Word is secondary, How tragic it is that there are churches where Bible studies have empty chairs and church services have empty pews, but potlucks, service events, game nights, and fellowship gatherings overflow with people. How tragic it is that there are churches where gimmicks, bait-and-switch tactics, and entertainment are the means to attract pagans into the doors, instead of the Word of God. No wonder why the faith of many Americans is so famished. No wonder why many Americans are so gullible to follow every cunning and deceitful scheme of religious peddlers in the marketplace of false religions.

An older pastor once sent out an email to a bunch of young seminarians. (Note: seminarians are those that are in training for ministry). David Petersen said to them:

*You are a servant of the Word. You are in the Preaching Office. Don't forget that. Your relationship to the congregation is the same as the prophets to Israel. Work on teaching and converting your own people-- which includes scores of folks not on the books. Preach the Gospel to them -- from the pulpit, the podium, the bedside, and behind the desk. They come looking for marital advice? Tell them about Jesus dying for them. They come looking for sympathy and a listening ear? Tell them about Jesus dying for them. They have a new baby, lost their jobs, are afraid of retirement? Tell them about Jesus dying for them. No matter what the circumstances, what the situation, you preach Christ crucified. Never compromise the simple Truth that has saved you.*

And so, we Christians are people of the Word because the Word is the power of God unto our salvation. Consider the following famous quote by Luther as well, in concluding this study:

*I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise, I did nothing. And while I slept or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything. Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany; indeed, I could have started such a game that even the emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? Mere fool's play. I did nothing; I let the Word do its work.*

