



Relentless Grace: How the Gospel Changes Everything

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Session 12 – The Simplicity of the Gospel | Romans Chapter 10

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).

Can you remember when those simple words first penetrated your heart? It probably wasn't the first time you heard them. Children are taught to recite this verse. If you're older than fifty, you've probably seen the words plastered on a roadside sign left to fade in the sun. John 3:16 is a favorite verse—but what do people actually *hear*? Skeptics hear a slogan. Disinterested masses hear a one-size-fits-all phrase. Pretenders hear the words they intend to fall back on someday. What do you hear?

Paul shared the gospel with anyone, anywhere, anytime. Sometimes his message was heard and accepted; sometimes it fell on deaf ears. That's what was troubling his mind in this chapter. He sadly acknowledged that the truth was all around, but some weren't listening.

Icebreaker

When are you most eager to share the gospel?

When are you most likely to be unsure or reluctant to share the gospel?

Goals for this Session:

- Discover why Paul's Jewish kinsmen rejected the gospel.
- Consider how and in what way God uses people to spread the gospel.
- Pray authentic prayers that embrace faith and produce disciples.

Zeal Without Knowledge

Romans 10:1–13

Zeal is not enough and ignorance is no excuse. Paul explains why Israel was accountable for rejecting the gospel.

1. **Paul’s heart and prayer** (verses 1–3). What did Paul desire, more than anything, for his Jewish kinsmen? Explain why Paul was personally invested to keep praying for them.

a. Do your best to explain what “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” means. Give some current-day examples of what that might look like.

b. Was there ever a time when you thought that living right or being open to spiritual things was enough to get to Heaven? What caused you to change your thinking?

#wordstoknow

Greek words/terms at a glance.

confess (homologeō) Agree with; openly profess and say what you believe.

zeal (zēlos) Fervent; avidly devoted; passionate about.

ignorant (agnoēō) In context, to not perceive, recognize, or be familiar with.

believe (pisteúō) Faith in; to be firmly persuaded.

saved (sōzo) Made whole; rescued from eternal death and penalty of sin.

2. **What Moses said** (verses 4–8). Everything about the Mosaic Law was intended to show they were sinners in need of a Savior, but Paul says *they missed the point*.^{*} Instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ (Galatians 3:24) they depended on themselves to keep the Law.

a. What did Paul mean when he said that Christ is the “end” of the Law? Use Matthew 5:17 and Romans 8:3–4 for help with your answer.

b. In verse 5, what point was Paul making about those who insist on living by the Law? Review Romans 2:17–24 and Romans 3:19–20 for help with your answer.

^{*} Paul’s own experience proved how zealous, determined, and sincerely *wrong* a person can be (Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14).

3. In verses 6–8, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30, where Moses warned Israel as they were about to enter the land of Canaan. This is part of his “choose life or choose death” message. Simply put, Moses told the people they didn’t need to look high and low for what to do, because they already had the Word (God’s instructions). They could respond by faith and obedience in their heart and live (Deuteronomy 30:14).

For Paul, the gist of it all was to show that the *word of faith* (the gospel) wasn’t a complicated system of rules. Jesus had come, and He was the Word made flesh (John 1:14–17).

a. According to verses 9–13, who can be saved?

b. What is, and is not, required?

- c. When we believe and confess that Jesus is Lord, what are we saying about Him? Why is this difficult or unappealing for many people? Consider what the following verses say . . .

“True faith must touch the will and result in a changed life.”

Warren Wiersbe

John 14:6

Acts 4:12

Luke 6:46

. . . and answer in your own words.

Memory Verse

As you memorize this verse, let it sink in and make it part of your prayers. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and increase your understanding.

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:9 NKJV

Think About It . . .

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? In what way?

Knowledge . . . With Zeal

Romans 10:14–21

All this talk of Israel’s zeal without knowledge broke Paul’s heart for sharing the gospel wide open. He traces the progression of the gospel back to the one being sent. But what if the one being sent never *went*? That would be knowledge without zeal. Good news is meant to be shared!

1. **Anatomy of sharing the gospel** (verses 14–15). Paul describes how God uses *people* to spread the gospel. Consider what this does and *does not* mean. Put a **T** (true) or **F** (false) next to the following statements. Then briefly explain your response.

___ I’m not qualified to share the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:26-27 and 2:1-5 | 2 Corinthians 3:5 and 4:7).

___ Sharing the gospel is easy—no preparation required (Acts 1:8 | 2 Timothy 2:15 | 1 Peter 3:15).

___ If I share the gospel but they don’t pray to accept Jesus, I wasn’t successful (1 Corinthians 3:6–9).

___ If they *do* pray, there’s nothing more I need to do (Matthew 28:19–20 | Acts 2:42 and 11:20–23).

___ If I bring them to church, I don’t need to share the gospel myself (Matthew 5:16 | Colossians 4:6).

2. If you could explain what belief in Jesus entails, in one sentence, what would you say?*

 - a. What can you recall about someone sharing the gospel with you before you were saved? Did it make sense to you? Did you respond right away? Share why or why not.
 - b. How would you describe your first efforts to share the gospel with someone? Share one or two tips for someone just starting out.

* Having a clear objective in mind can help us stay on point when talking about the gospel in normal conversation.

3. *How the gospel changes everything.* This chapter ends with a compelling image of God with His arms open wide, patiently waiting all the day long to draw Israel back to Himself. The picture was nearly a thousand years old when Paul found it in the prophet Isaiah’s writings (Isaiah 65:1–2). It has been a long day and God is still holding out His hands. When we consider the patience of God, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance, the power of the gospel is good news all over again.

a. The gospel is incentive to pray consistently and specifically to share the saving love of Christ with others. Identify three people you will commit to pray for, every day this month.

“I am convinced that the greatest act of love we can ever perform for people is to tell them about God’s love for them in Christ.”

Billy Graham

Give some thought to what course of action you will take. Be practical and specific.

b. The gospel is incentive to willingly go out of our way to help someone begin to know and grow in their relationship with Jesus. Can you identify one person who consistently pointed you to God and helped you to grow spiritually? In what way?

Are you presently, or have you in the past, done this for someone else? What would be necessary in order for you to cultivate this kind of relationship?



Gospel at a Glance: People Proclaim the Gospel | From the original Greek, we could translate the final question in Romans 10:14 as, “How shall they hear without one preaching?” The Phillips translation puts it this way, “How can they hear unless someone proclaims Him?” Therefore, we see the emphasis is not on a preacher, but on preaching. In 1 Corinthians 1:21, it says, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” This means that we are to recognize the primary way God has chosen to reach the lost is through the proclamation of the gospel—by people. God has chosen the agency of His proclaimed Word to bring people to salvation. —Greg Laurie¹

¹ Greg Laurie, *The Message Proclaimed*, Harvest: Greg Laurie Daily Devotion, August 18, 2017

Adoration **C**onfession **T**hankfulness **S**upplication

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18 NIV

In each session, we will pray—for ourselves, for others, for our church, and for our nation. As a focus for prayer, use the memory verse, another scripture, or what the Lord has impressed on you from the chapter. No need to be profound or elaborate, just authentic.

Write a simple prayer, including each element here.

A _____

C _____

T _____

S _____

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