

A Sermon
Global South Fellowship of Anglicans
First Assembly, Cairo, Egypt
16 June 2024
Romans 10:1-10

The subject of this short passage is salvation.

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. Romans 10:1

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. v10

How we praise and thank God that he is a saving God! We rejoice that the gospel is God's power of salvation for everyone who believes. God is the God of salvation.

I want to make three brief observations from this passage.

First, the desire for salvation, verses 1-2.

Second, the design of salvation, verses 3-8.

And third, the dynamic of salvation, verses 9-10.

The Desire for Salvation (v1-2)

In chapters 9-11 Paul is reflecting on the problem that his own people have not accepted the gospel. In chapter 9 he addresses this issue in terms of God's election. In chapter 10 he turns to the human factors at play.

But he begins by sharing his own 'heart'. '(M)y heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved' (v1). The 'them' is Israel (9:31). In chapter 9 verse 2 Paul said his 'heart' had 'great sorrow' and 'unceasing anguish' for his brothers, his kinsmen, the Israelites who have not believed. Now, in chapter 10, he shares his heart's desire – and what his heart desires he is moved by God's Spirit to pray for – that his countrymen may be saved.

How glad and grateful we are for the example of our apostle in these things. I do not hesitate to say that many of us share the apostle's sorrow, anguish, desire and prayer that our countrymen may be saved.

How glorious it is that in this room we are gathered from forty different nations as those who confess Christ as Lord. Most likely, we represent even more than forty cultures, tribes and dialects – to us the gospel has come in redeeming and transforming power and yet, many of us would say – with unceasing anguish – that countless tens of thousands, even millions of our countrymen remain strangers to the covenant of promise, without hope and without God in the world. And how we long for the love of God in the gospel of God to be known and gladly embraced by our fellow kinsmen.

Paul says these remarkable words in chapter 9 verse 3:

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul is willing, if it were possible, to sacrifice his own salvation for the sake of some of his kinsmen being saved. There is nothing he would not give up if it means the salvation of some.

In this room, we know and we praise and bless God for brothers and sisters especially from this continent and from Asia, who have made their stand against false religion and false ideology; who have not been cowed, defeated or silenced by intimidation, violence, legislative discrimination and economic oppression. No – they have stood their ground and made their stand for the gospel of Christ. Why? Not for their own sake, but so that their countrymen may be saved.

And also in our midst are those who have made their stand against apostate religion – even within Anglican denominations. They have sacrificed church buildings, church houses, church pensions and the comfort, credibility and respect offered to Anglican institutions which yield to the principalities and powers and cease to proclaim the truth and demand of the gospel. They have made their stand and sacrificed so much. Why? For the sake of the salvation of their countrymen.

They could have kept their own counsel. They could have said, ‘what is it to me if bishops, or synods or theological commissions deny the truth? I have not.’

But instead, they have said, 'I will not associate myself with an apostate institution and I will not have fellowship with bishops and synods who deny the Lord who saved me.' And so, in the United States, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia and in England, some have sacrificed everything the denomination provided. In doing so, that have made clear the supreme worth, the urgent necessity and the transforming power of the unchanging gospel, and the utter supremacy and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ – so that more of their countrymen may be saved.

We honour those who 'stay and fight' – I consider myself and my diocese among them – but we *must* honour those who have borne the greater cost.

The Ash Wednesday Statement of the GSFA last year, and the Kigali Commitment of Gafcon IV, represented the joint and united declaration of the vast majority of global orthodox Anglicans that the Anglican communion will not be surrendered to leadership that denies the authority, truth and trustworthiness of the Word of God and its expression in Anglican life and ministry, liturgy and formularies.

If the apostle could contemplate being *separated from Christ* for the salvation of his countrymen, we must not hesitate in our generation to separate from false teaching wherever and by whomever it is manifested. Rather, we will make our stand on the unchanging gospel of God, that some may be saved.

The desire of the apostle's heart is that his countrymen may be saved.

The Design of Salvation (v3-8)

The Israelites were ignorant of the righteousness of God, Paul says, and so did not submit to God's righteousness. That is, they sought to establish their own righteousness by obedience to the law rather than seeing that Jesus is the 'end' of the law, both its fulfilment - since he alone lived a life in complete obedience to God's law - and in the sense that Christ's obedience abrogated the law, since those who believe have Christ's righteousness imputed to them. He atones for our disobedience and we are credited with his righteousness, by faith.

Moses taught that the righteousness that is by law requires obedience to the commandments (v5). But the righteousness that is by faith in Christ does not seek 'Christ above' or 'Christ below' (v6-7), as though Jesus needs to endlessly repeat his work in incarnation, atoning death, resurrection and ascension but rather, salvation comes from faith in the word that is proclaimed concerning the finished work of Christ (v8). The gospel of the apostles brings Christ near in all his saving and ascended power. And if the word is near, it is also effective. Where Christ is preached, Christ is present! Hallelujah!

The Dynamic of Salvation (v9-10)

Paul says the same thing twice – meaning we must be doubly attentive!

...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (v9-10)

It is a grave error to think of these words as a 'magic formula' or easy believism'. Such a view misses Paul's point.

'(C)onfess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord'. The earliest and simplest Christian creed; the briefest summary of the gospel.

It's a message about *Jesus*. He is *Lord* – the Word made flesh; God incarnate. He is *Lord* – victor over all evil and the enemies of humanity including sin, death and the devil. He is *Lord* – the ruler over his church by his Word; the one who enables the obedience his lordship demands by the power of the Spirit he supplies.

The failure of some Anglican provinces (sadly including the Church of England) to uphold the biblical ethic of sexuality is an issue of the gospel because, among other things, it denies the humanity of Christ who was fully human and yet single and celibate throughout his life; and it denies the Lordship of Christ by suggesting that obedience is not part of our response to the gospel.

It is these denials of the gospel that make our regretful, painful and prayerful withdrawal from fellowship with those who teach such things essential – as a loving reproof and rebuke in the hope that those who wander from the truth will repent and be restored.

One cannot say ‘Jesus is Lord’ and then disobey his Word and teach others to do the same. We cannot with the same mouth say ‘Jesus is Lord’ and remain silent in the face of the denial of his lordship in any part of life.

Paul says, ‘if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead – you will be saved.’ Heart and mouth - inward belief and outward confession – they belong together. As bishops and leaders of God’s people we may not choose to maintain private belief in the truth of God’s Word and the reality of Christ’s lordship and at the same time give public expression to the opposite. On the contrary, as bishops and presbyters in the Anglican church we have sworn an oath to drive away error. We may not accommodate to false teaching or acquiesce by silence.

This is the fundamental flaw in the concept of ‘walking together in difference’, when the disagreement concerns matters of importance and not merely trivial differences. To do so is to obscure Jesus’ lordship – but his Word is not confused, his power to change sinful hearts is not limited, his portrayal of the holy life is not this and that, but one.

When we 'walk together' with differences over matters of salvation, gospel matters, then the message is distorted, confused and weak. A church that proclaims a distorted, confused and weak gospel will itself be weak and confused. This is just what we see, especially in parts of the Western church where the gospel is distorted to accommodate and appease ungodliness and the rejection of the lordship of Christ.

But, 'if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved'!

Inward belief and trust, outward confession and manifestation. The church must neither accept nor adopt the contemporary division between public and private worlds as though we could maintain a private Christian belief without a public outward demonstration of our belief in the lordship of Christ.

The dynamic of salvation is both inward conviction and outward demonstration. Jesus is Lord not only in our hearts but in our lives. The righteousness that is by faith in Christ does not lack obedience to Christ, but rather is full of joy and thanks in the assurance that Jesus is Lord and is able to bring about in us what pleases him, even as by faith we are saved.

Paul applies the teaching of these opening verses of chapter 10, in the second half of the chapter.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (v13) The original and awesome inclusivity of the gospel! There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (v12). It is a source of immense joy to me that the global Anglican fellowship so beautifully expresses the true universal scope of the finished work of Christ – he is Lord of all, and all may know his salvation if they call on him.

Paul leaves us with a famous four stage challenge in verses 14 and 15.

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 not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

The Lord has gathered us here in Egypt by the gospel of his Son, that gathers people in from every tribe and language and nation and tongue. And now, as our conference concludes, so the Lord sends us from here to forty countries around the world – to preach!

To make known the excellencies of the Son, the greatness of his love, the power of his compassion, the urgency of his entreaty, the completeness of his redemption, the certainty of his judgement, the imminence of his return.

The Lord sends us from here to speak of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light. The Lord sends – and of those whom he sends, the apostle says, quoting Isaiah, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’

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