

The Power of Your Testimony

(Romans Session 41)

Romans 10:11-13

11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

This section begins with Paul exulting in the generosity of God. The wide scope of salvation’s offer is put on display for all to see.

God’s Generosity

- **Whoever believes** on Him will not be put to shame.
- The same Lord over all **is rich to all who call upon Him.**
- **Whoever calls** on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now this sounds a lot like an open offer to me. It is being extended to any who will embrace it. No matter where a person is from, or how checkered their past may be, the offer stands. God will receive...and Christ will save, whoever—whoever—calls on His name.

Whatever that means. Not to worry—we’ll deal with that in a few moments.

Now I don’t know about you, but I love to get a good deal. A couple of years ago, I needed to do something about our yards at home. The lawns were such bad shape that it seemed logical to tear them out and start over again from scratch. Which meant that I had to do some roto-tilling.

Fortunately, I had an old roto-tiller on hand. It was pretty rickety—I had one of the cables held together by pinching it in a pair of vice grips and leaving the vice grips on the machine while I ran it. But it had a Briggs & Stratton engine that always started right up. And so the old machine got the job done. Well, to be more accurate, it got the job started.

The thing is, it broke down when I was right in the middle of using it.

So I took it apart and things were just shredded inside the gearbox. No way to fix it without spending way more than the machine was worth.

But I’m at the point of no return. There’s no turning back, and I’ve got to see this project through to the end, which means I’ve got to come up with another roto tiller.

There was no sense in renting one, because they cost about a hundred a day, and I’d be needing it off and on over the course of several days.

But I figured with any luck, I might be able to find a decent used one for a couple of hundred bucks. That sounded a lot better than spending \$800 or more on a new one.

But before I went on Craig’s List to look for a used one, I started searching online to see what the new ones were going for. And I came across this post that said that Home Depot had 6,000 roto-tillers nationwide that they were selling at a radical discount.

I thought it was a scam at first. But I checked further, and it was definitely a legitimate offer. Needless to say, I ordered one right away.

And these weren’t the funky lightweight tillers with the tines on the front end that bounce you all over the place. No, these were brand spanking new rear-tine tillers with counterweights on the front end and lots of power. They were on sale for only \$179.

Well, what do you do when you find a really good deal? You probably do what I do. We brag about it. We share the good news of our great buy with others.

But in this case, it wasn’t just one good deal. There were still thousands of those tillers still waiting to be bought.

So here’s how it played out in my situation—because of me bragging on this good deal, my son-in-law Joe ends up buying one of them for their place.

So in a sense, you might say I was working as an evangelist for Home Depot by passing the word on to Joe.

Oh, and just for kicks I looked online the other day to see what these tillers are going for these days, just out of curiosity. \$900 and change. See? I can't stop bragging.

You see, just about any business person will tell you that the most effective means of advertisement is word of mouth.

A recommendation from someone you know and trust is worth way more than just about any ad campaign regarding the same product. Of course, there are those ads that didn't work simply because they were poorly done. Just for fun, I looked up a few and thought I would share them this morning.

It was interesting that the ones I came across were aimed mostly at women, specifically wives and mothers. Which makes sense, when told by those that know that the ladies make or strongly influence about 85% of all purchasing decisions.

So let's hear it for the ladies, as we look at what some of the advertisers hoped would work on them.

Gift Set



Just what every new bride is looking forward to, right? And I'm sure all the prospective brides made sure to put these items on their wedding registry.

And then there was another ad where they weren't really trying to sell a product. They just decided to try and buy some good will from the ladies for their company. What do you think of their approach?

Wall of Honor



We celebrate remarkable women...

Well, that's a nice thought. But what's up with this picture? Who are they honoring on this billboard? Not women. But they are honoring themselves for being so nice about honoring women. Clueless.

Moms are a big target for advertisers, and a significant source of revenue for many businesses, because moms are highly motivated to do what's best for their kids.

And this next advertisement is my favorite. It's talking about giving your child good head start in life.

Cola



Let me read a bit of the copy to you.

Laboratory tests over the last few years have proven that babies who start drinking soda during that early formative period have a much higher chance of gaining acceptance and fitting in during those awkward pre-teen and teen years.

Of course, husbands are not left entirely out of the picture. The obvious thought here is to encourage the husband to think of the wife's convenience, and buy more electric appliances.

**Dont
kill your
wife with
WORK!**

*Let
Electricity
do it*

**WILLESDEN ELECTRICITY DEPT
131 SALUSBURY ROAD. N.W.6**

[illegible]

These are all names or titles that speak of Jesus. A great number of these describe a certain aspect of your relationship to Christ, and in that sense they could be something for you to testify about.

Here's just a few for us to consider:

- Lamb of God
- Redeemer
- The Vine
- Counselor
- God With Us
- Our Ransom
- Everlasting Father
- Good Shepherd
- Bread of Life

But in our text in **Romans 10**, Paul mentions three things that are variations on the same theme, and could easily be testified about.

Let's read it again:

Romans 10:11-13

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

So this is our confession, our testimony that we can confidently make to anyone who cares to listen.

Our confession

- **Whoever believes** on Him will not be put to shame.
- The same Lord over all **is rich to all who call upon Him.**
- **Whoever calls** on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This wonderful generosity directed at us by God is something we could share with other people. Most people long to get right with God, to get connected with God. But they think their sins disqualify them, or what have you. Even the atheists recognize the value of our message.

Let me read you a quote from a professed atheist. It serves to give us some perspective? He makes this point: If he believed the way we do, then this is how he would approach life.

In the quote he used the word "religion" quite a bit. I have taken the liberty of replacing that word "religion" with the word "Christ" of some aspect of our relationship with Christ to get the idea across with better accuracy. OK, here's the quote:

An Atheist's View

If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and experience of Christ in this life influences the soul's destiny in eternity, then the message of Christ would mean everything to me. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Jesus would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labor in His cause alone. I would take thought for eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering.

Earthly consequences would never stay in my head or seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon eternity alone, and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach Christ in season and out of season. And my message would be, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?"

That's what you might call looking at a situation with fresh eyes. We get so used to hearing certain things that the impact of what they represent gets lessened.

There is a story I love to tell about a Dutch woman who was in a similar frame of mind as this atheist. She was a card-carrying Communist back in the day, and she happened to be working alongside a man who was a strong believer.

In fact, this was a young man who was headed to the mission field in a very unique way. He would spend decades smuggling Bibles.

Taking them into areas of the world where it was a crime to possess a Bible, where being a Christian was forbidden by law.

These two people worked in a chocolate factory in Holland, and it was the young missionary's last day on the job before he left to embark on his life's mission.

I'll quote from his autobiography—a book with the title ***“God's Smuggler”***. His name is Andrew and her name is not given, I guess out of consideration for her privacy.

During Andrew's time working at the factory, he had been outspoken regarding his faith in Christ. And she had been just as outspoken in her resistance to his message. She was basically friendless, and utterly humorous. Andrew writes this:

I stopped by the bench where she worked to say Good bye. ***“Well,”*** I said, ***“you're getting rid of me at last!”*** Hoping at least to keep our parting friendly.

“But not of the lies you've told!” she shot back at me. ***“You've hypnotized these people with your talk of salvation and pie-in-the-sky! You've blinded them with...”*** I sighed and settled myself in for the opiate of the people lecture. But to my surprise, the angry voice faltered.

“Of course, they believed you,” she went on less certainly. ***“They're untrained. They haven't learned dialectical argument. They think just what they want to think.”***

“After all”—her voice was so low I could scarcely hear—***“if you could choose, who wouldn't choose, well God—and all that.”***
I glanced at her swiftly and I thought I saw the unthinkable. I thought I saw tears in her eyes.

If only it were true. That's what she was thinking. ***If only it were true***, she was confessing, ***I'd jump at the chance to embrace it.***

Well, it is true. True beyond her wildest imagination, or anyone else's. A message of the ultimate hope, and amazing possibilities.

And so Paul continues his emphasis on the need for sharing the gospel in the next couple of verses. His previous thought was this:

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And with that thought in mind, Paul extends his line of reasoning with a series of questions.

Romans 10:14-15

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”

Four questions are posed in rapid succession.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?

That's a simple enough concept. And here's the thing for all of you would-be evangelists to ponder: It's not enough to get a person to recite the sinner's prayer, so called. Dragging a person to church or up to the altar to pray—that is not enough. They have to believe on Christ first of all and most of all. Otherwise, any subsequent religious activity is meaningless.

Second question:

And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

Here's the thing—Faith does not arise out of nowhere. It doesn't suddenly appear for no reason in a person's heart and soul. Let's skip down to **verse 17** where Paul makes a critical observation.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Paul lists the steps in reverse order. Faith is the objective; the kind of faith that gets a person right with God. We'll call this ***“saving faith.”***

So Paul is describing a journey of sorts that brings a person along to saving faith. No two journeys are alike.

Some are relatively short. Some may take decades. But the journey is never made without the Word of God. Whenever a person experiences genuine saving faith, it will always be based on the Scriptures.

But it's this middle step that Paul speaks of that turns Bible knowledge into life-transforming saving faith.

As we noted last week, knowledge is a good thing. But it always stops short of completing the circuit. The hearing that Paul speaks of is what turns Bible knowledge into faith. It is the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to a person's heart.

And this was the problem that Paul identifies in his fellow Jews. And it is to their current frame of mind that he now turns his attention.

Romans 10:18-21

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

In the next chapter Paul will deal at length with God's plan to spiritually restore Israel before the end comes.

And the interesting thing is this: he shows us that the blindness that came upon Israel to not recognize their Messiah—that blindness was allowed to happen, in part, so that the Gentile nations would have the opportunity to respond to the Gospel.

And so when it comes to receiving the message of Christ, Paul says the Jews are down. But they are not out. Don't count them out—He says they will come around. But that's material for next week.

For the time being and in response to what we have looked at today, let's pray that God will use our testimonies as individual Christians. That when we share our faith with others, that our words will be

used by God to bring somebody into the faith—Jews, Gentiles, anyone.

Anyone who will slow down long enough to hear the voice of the Spirit, who is always present and always whispering this amazing and hopeful message:

Romans 10:13

For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.