

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

March 27, 2022

Day 1: Romans 10:9

because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved

To confess is to make a positive statement of what you believe. In this case it is about believing Jesus is God. When Paul was writing these words most of the Roman world believed in some sort of divine power. In fact, the Christians were called atheists by one Roman writer because they did not believe in all the other gods. The importance of actually saying the words, "Jesus is Lord," is that if the words are kept private (but in our mind) then they are not real. What we are asked to believe and state publicly is that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Question: Why do you believe Jesus was raised from the dead?

Challenge: Write a positive statement of what you believe.

Scripture: 1 John 3:22-4:8

Day 2: Romans 10:10

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

The heart, for Paul, is not the seat of emotion but the very core of the personality. It is in this core that the transformation must take place. Genuine heart-level belief can only come about by the divine action of the Spirit. Faith is the sign that the gospel has done its work. The act of confessing and believing is not two parts but one. What is true for us is that we do not know what we believe until we state it. A belief that stays in our head may appear to be known but in fact it is not until it is said. Now the "saying" can be in actions, but verbally or by action it is still public. Jesus said that a person born of the Spirit can be compared to the wind. We cannot see it but we can see its effects.

Question: If one acknowledges Christ as Lord with our heart, why does a person need to say something?

Challenge: How could a person "confess with their mouth" if they could not speak?

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:11-5:3

Day 3: Romans 10:11

The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.

Shame is the feeling of not being good enough. Shame affects us differently from guilt (the feeling of doing something wrong) because we will try harder to hide our shame than our guilt. When our guilt is exposed we are not happy but we believe there is a way to put the guilt behind us. When our shame is exposed there is no way to say, "I am sorry - I have done something wrong," because what we fear is wrong is not our act, but our very self. Humans will do almost anything to cover up shame and not let it be seen. There is a movie about a WW II German female prison guard who could have avoided prison by admitting she could not read. Her shame at being unable to read caused her go to prison for the rest of her life. Guilt can be dealt with by forgiveness but shame can only be dealt with by letting someone see your "shame" and still love you.

Question: Why would one be ashamed to believe in Jesus as Lord?

Challenge: Think about a time you felt guilt and when you felt shame. Which was worse for you?

Scripture: Isaiah 60:19-22

Day 4: Romans 10:12-13

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

We have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Jesus came into the world not to condemn but that all might be saved through Him. With these two verses in mind we see that we become part of the family of God through adoption, not birth. It is Paul's vision that both Jew and Gentile will come together in God's kingdom. Even though Paul is called the apostle to the Gentiles he always firmly believed that God would not abandon His first love.

Question: What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord?

Challenge: Rewrite the first part of the verse (there is no distinction between Jew and Greek) using different words to describe two sets of people.

Scripture: Joel 2

Day 5: Romans 10:14-15

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

God is willing to listen to all who call upon Him but how will they hear unless they are told? We become the hands, feet and the voice of God's word of hope. However, a single person cannot do this great task nor is a single person supposed to do this task. It is the task of the church - the whole body of Christ - to send those who will carry the message. The job of proclaiming the Good News falls to the whole body. One of the key parts of our missionary task is to send. Sending is that act of spiritually going with those doing the preaching. When one or many go, we all go and we must support with our prayers and money those who are in fulltime missionary work here or abroad.

Question: Where is it written (in the Old Testament), 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news?'

Challenge: Look at the UMC web site for a list of Missionaries and commit to pray for one of them this next month

Scripture: Isaiah 52

Day 6: Romans 10:16-17

But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Not all will respond but that is not our worry. When Jonah was sent to warn Nineveh they repented and were saved. He did not know he would be successful but he went (eventually) to preach. We will plant, another will water, and another will reap the harvest. God calls us to be faithful, not successful.

Question: What does it mean to "obey" the Good News?

Challenge: What is God calling you to do this week?

Scripture: Jonah