

There Was Only Ever One Way By Faith

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you very much. One of the things that I love about this little family of faith that has been present before I came.

! One of the things that I love about this little family of faith that has been present before I came. I've seen it while I've been here and I hope that it remains. Three particular things.

The way people are welcomed in. The way the family love each other. And the way people are sent off. What a wonderful thing. I think it's one of the great pictures of the people of Jesus.

Is the way that they welcome brothers and sisters. The way they love brothers and sisters. And the way that they send off brothers and sisters. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing. This morning, we are not in Mark today.

And next week's Palm Sunday. And the following week's Easter. And so we're kind of taking a break, a breather from Mark just now. I thought we'd delve into the book of Romans today.

[1 : 1 6] And so if you have a Bible, please turn it open to Romans chapter 9. And I'm going to be reading from 9 into 10. And I really want to try and make sense of some of what Paul is saying.

One of the things that often happens if you're preparing a message, if you're studying the Bible.

Sometimes you'll notice things that people might not immediately notice. And so Paul quotes a couple of Old Testament passages in his argument. And you might just read what Paul says and think, okay, yeah, sure, Paul.

But if you go and check out those Old Testament passages, you might think, what on earth are you doing, Paul? It looks like you're using these Old Testament passages in a way that they weren't presented at first in the Old Testament.

Is Paul changing things up? Is he fiddling with the Word of God? And so I'm kind of presenting a problem that you maybe didn't know was there.

[2 : 2 4] So that we can solve a problem that you didn't know was there. So that we can better understand the entirety of the Bible. And hopefully that will make sense in a wee bit of time.

So as we go through this passage, hopefully the way that I explain it, you'll be able to look at it and track with it and see it makes sense. And so I'm going to read from 9.27 down to 10.13.

Before I read that, you've got it there, keep it in your thumbs.

Before I read that, I'm going to do a very quick quiz. Bible quiz, Bible drill. And then I'm going to read the passage. And then I'm going to mention two movies from the 90s.

If you were around then, maybe you'll remember these movies. And then we're going to zoom in in chapter 10 particularly. But first I want to do a quick quiz.

[3 : 32] If you are used to the Bible, Paul, the writer of Romans, he wrote 13 of the New Testament letters, 27 New Testament letters.

He wrote 13 of them, right? Almost half of the New Testament. And every single time he wrote a letter to a church in the New Testament, he introduces himself just like you would at the front of a letter.

And on average, the way he introduces himself is with 11 words. Okay, Paul, yada, yada, yada. That was, I spoke in Hebrew there. Yiddish.

Paul, and then 11. 11 words. 11 words is the average of the 13 letters that he wrote. His introduction of himself, before he says two in the church, he says about 11 words about himself.

Usually it's something like this. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God. Okay, 11 words. Now, quiz.

[4 : 37] Out of the 13 letters that he wrote, which has the shortest introduction by Paul? What do you think? Shout out your answers if you've got an answer.

Guess. Galatians? Any advances on Galatians? Don't worry, you may not even know what letters he wrote.

You might controversially say Hebrews, and we don't know who wrote Hebrews. Hebrews doesn't have an introduction. If you said an Old Testament letter, we won't judge you, you know. It's okay.

Okay, out of all these letters that he wrote, the shortest is, how many do you think it's not Galatians? How many by, if the average is 11, have a guess of what the shortest one is?

What do you think? Four. Four. Six. Probably seven. Perfect number.

[5 : 40] The shortest introduction is one word, and it is to the Thessalonians. Poor Thessalonians, they only get one word. That's 10 words less than the average.

But he does it because he's writing a letter with a bunch of other people. He's writing it with Silas and Timothy. So he just says, Paul, Silas, Timothy, to the Thessalonians.

And so it's like, quick and to the point. Now, if Thessalonians just get a name, and the average for the other letters is 11, which letter do you think has the longest introduction of all Paul's letters?

What do you think? Ephesians? Romans? Sorry? Corinthians?

What did you see, Eleanor? Philippians? You see, Crawford's done many tests. He knows where it's going. He's like, if we're in Romans, it must be Romans.

[6 : 46] It's Romans. The book of Romans has the longest introduction of any of Paul's letters. If the average is 11, what do you think Romans gets? Don't check. Go sit there and count. How many do you think it is?

So it's got to be more than 11. 20. Any advances? 22? 25? Sold?

The man at the back. Any advances on 25? The average is 11. The book of Romans, Paul's introduction, before he even says, to the Romans, Paul's introduction is 103 words.

103 words. Now, this is something to check out in your own time, but when we're looking at our Bibles, we're trying to learn what they mean, we're studying our Bibles, these kind of things matter.

Notice these things. Why does Paul use over 100 words to the Romans when he uses an average of 11 to everyone else and one to Thessalonians?

[7 : 45] It's got to matter. He's trying to tell us something. Over 100 times of the Thessalonians. And so there must be a reason why he does this.

And this is going to matter for our passage. It's going to matter for the entire book of Romans, if you want to understand Romans. And why does he use so many words to introduce who he is and what his ministry is about?

And so I'm going to give you, in a nutshell, what I think one of the reasons is. But this is something to delve into in your own time. Okay? Why does Paul use such a very, very long introduction to the Romans, particularly for the book of Romans?

Well, it's because Paul is not someone who has turned his back on Judaism. And his ministry is not a ministry that has departed from Moses and the law.

And that's really, really important. Because Paul was a Pharisee and he was a proud Jew. He was a student of the Old Testament law. He was very strict and zealous for God.

[8 : 50] And he had a general disdain for those outside of the law. He was a Jew's Jew. And then he saw the followers of Jesus as blasphemers and he persecuted them greatly.

And even although they were fellow Jews, he tried to destroy them. And yet, despite having Roman citizenship through his father, he would have viewed non-Jews as unclean and outside of the grace of God.

But when Paul was converted, he would then become the apostle to the non-Jews. And yet, when this massive change happened in his life, he had this massive shift in his understanding.

Yet, and this is the important point, he never once abandoned his Jewish roots. And this fact matters in his argument for Romans. And at the point of writing this letter, there would have been countless people accusing Paul of abandoning Judaism, of abandoning Moses, and of abandoning the law.

Now that he's gone out to the Gentiles, people were accusing Paul of turning his back on Moses and the law. But he never did this. He never did this.

[10 : 03] And so even today, we as Christians can think that the law and faith are opposition. They're opponents. That Moses and Paul would have been opponents.

As though Moses preached a different way to be saved than Paul preached. But the law and faith are not two separate ways to be saved. And it's important to know this.

And this is why Paul gives such a large introduction. And this is why Paul writes the book of Romans. And what we're going to see today in Romans 10 is that there's not two ways. Moses didn't preach a different way from Paul.

And Paul's certainly not preaching a different way from Moses. And so let's open the word. And let us see that there was only ever one way.

Always. There was always only ever one way to be saved. And that way we'll understand the argument. So from verse 27 of chapter 9. Romans chapter 9.

[11 : 02] And it says this. Isaiah cries out concerning Israel. Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sands of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay as Isaiah predicted. If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

What shall we say then? Shall we say the Gentiles who pursued righteousness have attained it? That is a righteousness that is by faith. But the Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? Why did they not succeed? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone as it is written.

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them, his fellow Jews, is that they may be saved.

[12 : 16] For I bear witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

But the righteousness based on faith says, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who will descend into the abyss, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart. That is the word of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and you 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. For the scripture says, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

[13 : 31] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Amen. Amen. Okay, how can we understand what Paul's doing with the Old Testament here?

Well, there's some movies from the 90s that can help. And don't worry if you've not seen them, I'll fill you in with a very basic plot line. The 90s were pretty good for movies. I remember many a Friday night going to Global Video with my mum, browsing the aisles.

Not only were there many great movies, but the movies had great lines, very quotable movies. And as I was thinking about Paul's argument in 9 to 11, chapters 9 to 11, I thought about Paul's understanding of the law pre-conversion and Paul's understanding of the law post-conversion.

And so two movies help us understand the shift that Paul had pre-conversion and post-conversion. The first movie is a 1999 movie called The Matrix.

[14 : 42] Anyone ever heard of The Matrix? Okay. The Matrix. Neo is this guy who's an office worker by day and he's a computer hacker by night. And he's generally suspicious and he's looking for something more and he knows about a guy who might have answers.

A guy called Morpheus. Now, one day he's at work in his office and he's in his office cubicle and he receives a package and it's a mobile phone. And immediately when he opens the package, the phone, the phone rings and it's Morpheus.

And he says to Neo that people are coming to capture him and Neo asks how he can get out and Morpheus says this and this is what I want you to remember. Morpheus says, I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say.

I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say. That's the first quote. Okay? Second movie, 1991, a film called Terminator 2, Judgment Day.

Great, great movie. The first Terminator, Arnold Schwarzenegger was a really bad guy, a terrifying robot programmed to kill Sarah Connor. In the second movie, he turns up again and it turns out, he turns up to this psychiatric ward where Sarah ended up and he bursts in and he throws everyone out of the way and he finds Sarah and she's terrified but surprisingly he reaches out to her and he says this.

[16 : 13] Do anyone know what he says? Thank you, Darren. Thank you. Come with me if you want to live. That's the second quote. Okay, the first quote, I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say.

Second quote, come with me if you want to live. Alright? So, these two quotes can help us understand Paul's understanding of the law both pre-conversion and post-conversion.

Paul's argument in Romans, he sees the same problem with his fellow Jews. This pre-conversion understanding of the law is all over his fellow Jews and he wants them to understand how to truly understand the law.

And so, the zealous and legalistic Jew might view the law simply as a set of instructions that must be followed. I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say.

That's how they understood the law. Paul and a lot of his fellow Jews understood God's law as I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say.

[17 : 24] And if you don't do exactly as I say, too bad for you. So, as long as you follow the instructions exactly as they are, you will live. But post-conversion, Paul now understands the law more like Terminator 2.

It's not so much about an impersonal set of instructions to be carried out flawlessly, but it's rather about a person to be followed. Post-conversion, Paul now sees the law as that hand going out to invite him to follow the lawgiver.

Come with me if you want to live. You see, when Paul says in Romans 10, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.

Paul isn't saying that Christ brings the law to an end. Rather, he is saying that Christ is the logical end of the law. He is the goal. He is the goal and conclusion and the sum total of the law.

The law is what points to Christ. It leads you to Christ. And so, it's not about the instructions in and of themselves, but it is about the person who gives the instructions, the person who is the end of the instructions.

[18 : 44] Come with me if you want to live. Paul says that his fellow Jews missed this because, look at verse 3, Paul says, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish a righteousness which is their own, they did not submit to the righteousness of God.

I.e., verse 4, Christ, who is the end of the law, he is the righteousness of God and they did not submit to him. If we only focus on what Paul generally says about righteousness and law, we might think that Moses in the Old Testament promote a different way to righteousness than Jesus and the gospel, but it doesn't.

We must see that what Paul says about how his fellow Jews view righteousness, they misunderstand it. And so what Paul is saying, that a misunderstanding of the law and of the righteousness of God will only make you think that there's a different way to salvation, but there's not.

There was only ever one way, always only one way, and the way is always a person. It's never a set of instructions, it's always a person. And so that view, verse 3, the view that thinks I can guide you, but you must do exactly as I say, the law itself, that view, Paul says in verse 3, is ignorant of the righteousness of God.

That view is trying to establish a righteousness of your own. When you think it's all about the instructions and you can carry them out exactly as they are, then you're trying to establish a righteousness of your own.

[20 : 29] But Paul says, this a little earlier, in chapter 9, verse 30 and 31, he said, how is it that non-Jews who didn't have the law, who didn't follow the instructions, how is it that they have attained a righteousness apart from the law, but through faith?

Yet the Jew who did pursue the law and who did follow the instructions didn't succeed in reaching it. Why? Verse 32, because they didn't pursue it.

By faith. They didn't pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Do you see that? They pursued it as if it were based on works. As if means it's not actually based on works. And so now that Paul sees Christ, he sees that faith was actually implicit in the law all along, the whole time.

He now sees that righteousness was never attained by works, but was always by faith. The law was never given so that righteousness could be attained merely through following instructions.

[21 : 43] But the law itself was to be pursued by faith. And that is faith in the one who gives the law. This way we can see, even in the matrix quote, I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say, we can see that even in that quote, it's not about the instructions, it's about whether Neo trusts Morpheus or not.

Are you going to trust the person? Are you going to trust the person behind the instruction, behind the command, behind the law? Both movie quotes require the same thing.

Not merely following the command but trusting the person behind the command. Come with me if you want to live. And so understanding this truth, let's look at verse 5 and 6 of chapter 10.

Verse 5 and 6. Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law. A person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who will ascend into the abyss, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

It might look as if Paul is setting Moses and the law against faith, but he's not. And it might look as if there's two ways to righteousness, one via the law and one via faith, but there's not two ways.

[23 : 11] So Paul's argument, he goes through it and he draws on Old Testament passage after Old Testament passage, and so I've tried to boil it down just to four points of his argument. Number one, first point, there is only one way to righteousness, only one way to righteousness and it is by faith.

Number two, there is only one Lord who saves, and that is Jesus Christ. Number three, anyone can have faith and call on his name to be saved, anyone.

And number four, he is much closer than you think. That's Paul's basic argument. Only one way to righteousness by faith, only one Lord who saves, Jesus Christ.

Anyone can have faith and call on his name to be saved, and he's much closer than you think. And Paul draws on the Old Testament to say, this has always been the same, always been the same. Verse five, Paul is alluding to Leviticus 18, you shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules.

if a person does them, he shall live by them. I am Yahweh. Then in verse six, he seems to contrast this, but the righteousness that is based on faith.

[24 : 34] Paul cannot be saying that the Leviticus quote shows a way to righteousness through the law because he already said that God knew before he gave the law that the people could not keep it perfectly.

faith was always implicit in the law. Think about this. What was included in the law that you had to do to animals?

Sacrifice. So implicit in the law was that you were going to break the law and therefore to keep the law you had to atone for your sins. So faith is always implicit in the law.

Leviticus quote is still set against the background. That faith is implicit in the law. But his point is that this fact is misunderstood by his fellow Jews who try to attain righteousness by their own works.

They look at the letter but they forget the Lord. There's only one way and there always was by faith in Yahweh. Faith in Yahweh the Lord.

[25 : 39] Verse 6 Paul then starts his quote with Deuteronomy 9. Just that little phrase do not say in your heart is from Deuteronomy 9. And then he moves on to Deuteronomy 30.

Who will ascend? The first quote in Deuteronomy 9 is very helpful because if you were to flip back to Deuteronomy 9 this is what the whole thing says. And so Paul is getting people to notice the whole thing.

In Deuteronomy 9 it says this. Do not say in your heart after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you. It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land.

It is not because of your righteousness but because of the wickedness of these nations. So just in that little phrase do not say in your heart Paul is saying remember it's not our righteousness.

Paul has this in mind to show that salvation is never down to our righteousness. And he's saying it as if to say to his fellow Jews as if we had any righteousness to begin with.

[26 : 43] Come on. As if we had any righteousness that could ever save us. We don't. None of us. No one on the earth has any righteousness good enough to save.

It is by faith. And then Paul goes on to Deuteronomy 30. And this is where the background of all this is really helpful. Because if you were to go back and I could just go on without this point and you would just trust me and that's fine.

But if you were to later go back to Deuteronomy 30 you would say hang on a minute it doesn't say that. What Paul is saying is not what it says in Deuteronomy 30. And so listen to this.

Deuteronomy 30. So Paul says who will ascend into heaven parenthesis that is to bring Christ down.

Who will descend into the abyss that is to bring Christ up from the dead. Try and spot the difference in Deuteronomy 30. for this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you neither is it far off.

[27 : 50] It is not in heaven that you should say who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it.

The word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it. So what's the difference? Who will ascend and bring what?

So in Deuteronomy it says the commandment but Paul says it's the Christ. Is Paul messing about with the word of God here? Well you can thank me for presenting a problem that you didn't know existed but hopefully we'll solve it by the end.

This is really important because Paul has already said Christ is the end of the law. He's the goal. He is the righteousness of God. And so Moses is talking about the commandment it's not too hard it's not far off it's not in heaven that you say who can go up and bring this command down?

It's not over the sea not the abyss. It's very near to you and then he says it's in your mouth and in your heart and Paul says a similar thing doesn't he?

[29 : 08] believe in your heart confess with your mouth. Is Moses and Paul preaching a different gospel? Why does Paul put Christ where Moses spoke about the commandment?

Why does Paul talk about the gospel being near to believe i.e. faith when it looks as if Moses is talking about the commandment being near to obey? We need to remember that Paul has had a shift in his understanding of the law, the Bible, and Christ.

Paul's Christological understanding of the Old Testament, he sees that faith is now implicit and has always been implicit in the law. While many of his fellow Jews missed this, I am certain that Moses also understood this.

Moses understood that faith is implicit in the law. Now, when Moses wrote Deuteronomy, was he specifically thinking about Christ when he was talking about the commandment coming down and being brought near?

You can ask him when you meet him. I don't know. In one sense, I don't think he has to be specifically thinking about that. But in another sense, I think he is without knowing it.

[30 : 22] I think he is thinking about it without knowing it. And what do you mean by that? Well, let me ask this. Is Paul legitimate to change Moses' words to be about Christ when Moses seems to be talking about the law?

I think yes, Paul is legitimate to say that. Because if Christ is the end point of the law, then faith in Christ is the same thing as the faith that was implicit in the law.

It's the same thing. And so, this is where point one meets point two. There is one way, there is one Lord. The faith implicit in the law is the same thing as faith in Christ.

To put more directly, and this is why I think Moses is talking about the same thing, to put it more directly, and we've got it, and we've been through Exodus, what Paul is in effect saying, and the New Testament writers are saying, is that faith in Yahweh is the same thing as faith in Jesus.

Same thing. And so, you'll see this because the quotes that he quotes, for instance, later on we'll hear, well, let's go through it.

[31 : 30] Moses doesn't need to be thinking specifically about Jesus. He only needs to know that the law requires faith in Yahweh, the lawgiver. Okay, as long as Moses thinks the law is going to require faith in Yahweh, and David understood that as well, that's all he needs to know.

Because he's thinking about Jesus without knowing it. Because who is Jesus? Who is Jesus anyway? There is one Lord.

Deuteronomy 6 says, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. The God who was revealed to Moses in the burning bush as Yahweh is the same God who was revealed to the world as Jesus.

Same Lord. Time and again, the New Testament writers apply Old Testament passages about Yahweh. You can check this, it's all over the New Testament. They apply Old Testament passages talking about Yahweh and they directly apply it to Jesus.

So for instance, look at verse 13 of Romans 10. Verse 13, it says, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Same thing in Acts chapter 2 on the mouth of Peter, and it comes from Joel chapter 2.

[32 : 49] Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now who is Paul meaning? He's meaning the Lord Jesus. But who did Joel mean? If you go back to Joel, it says everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved.

And so Paul is applying that to Jesus. In verse 9, he 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.

And that is a Christological reading of Joel chapter 2. So you see, in his argument and in the scriptures, firstly, there is only one way to be saved, and it is by faith.

There's only ever one way. Secondly, there is only one Lord. The Old Testament saints knew his name as Yahweh. The New Testament saints, post-Christ, know his name as Jesus.

Yeshua. Messiah. Messiah. Same Lord. And Jesus said this much to his fellow Jews in John chapter 5. He said, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you will have eternal life, but it is they that bear witness about me.

[34 : 01] Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. You refuse to come to me that you may have life. Come with me if you want to live. And so this Jesus business is neither a different way from the law and Moses in the Old Testament, nor does the gospel present a different Lord from the Lord of the Old Testament.

The one who rescued out of Egypt and delivered the law is the same Lord who took on flesh and preached the gospel. It's the same Lord, same God. And so while the Jews often claimed to worship Yahweh, it is evident that they didn't worship Yahweh because when he showed up in flesh, they rejected him.

When the Son of God showed up in flesh, they showed that they didn't know. If you knew the Father, you would know the Son, is what Jesus said. Now, is Paul adding more to Joel by saying confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead?

Didn't Joel just say call upon the name of the Lord? Paul is not only reading Joel with Christ in mind, but he's connecting it with Moses. because remember, he started by saying, verse 6, do not say in your heart.

Don't say in your heart that it's your righteousness that got you here. And so he's now telling us, verse 9, what you should say in your heart. See, he's masterfully connecting Moses in verse 8.

[35 : 33] It is in your mouth and your heart, says Moses. With Isaiah in verse 11, believe. Believe in your heart. And Joel says in verse 13, call with your mouth.

He's connecting all these Old Testament. Moses, Isaiah, Joel. Don't say in your heart that righteousness comes from you. What should you say in your heart?

Well, you should believe in your heart. Isaiah. You should confess with your mouth, says Joel. And so our third point, with respect to who can believe in and who can call on the name of the Lord.

Paul is saying anyone can have faith. Anyone can call on the Lord to be saved. Verse 11, for the scripture says everyone who believes in him, the one Lord, will not be put to shame.

Verse 12, there is no distinction. No distinction between Jews or non-Jews. The same Lord is Lord of all. If God created all of us, then he's the Lord of all people.

[36 : 43] And he bestows his riches on all who call on him. Verse 13, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And so this is why non-Jews can attain a righteousness that they didn't pursue.

They didn't keep it by keeping the law, but they attained it the right way, the only way, by faith. And in the only Lord, God, in Jesus.

While many of Paul's fellow Jews both didn't have faith and also rejected Yahweh by rejecting Jesus, the one Lord. And so even although they did have the law and they pursued righteousness by it and they kept it, they didn't have faith in the one Lord.

You see, the Isaiah quote in verse 11 is the same quote he referenced back in chapter 9 verse 33. He said, the Jews did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.

Paul uses the same Isaiah quote twice to say that the Old Testament salvation is based on faith the same way that the New Testament salvation is based on faith.

[37 : 52] Salvation has always been based on faith. It's the one way by faith and the one Lord for anyone who believes. And isn't that exactly what Paul said back in Romans 1 verse 16 and 17.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Why? Because it is the righteousness of God. It's salvation to all who believe, Jew and Greek, anyone.

Anyone can have this faith by believing in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. He is one Lord and anyone can call upon his name to be saved confessing that Jesus is Lord with his mouth.

And so finally point 4 he is closer, much closer than you think. You're doing very well. I know that's been quite technical.

Does it make sense so far? If you go and cross reference the quotes that Paul's using and follow the logic of his argument, Paul is saying this is something that he missed before he met Christ, something that many of his Jews missed, is that faith has always been implicit in the law.

[39 : 03] And this Jesus figure that he once thought was a blasphemer turns out to be the very Lord that was present all along. The Lord that they'd been believing in all the way up to Jesus turned up is the same Lord.

And so the gospel, he's much closer than you think. We know what the gospel is, don't we? The gospel is the message about Jesus, the whole truth about Jesus.

But the gospel is not just an impersonal newspaper about a far off event in history of a far off place in the world. You don't need to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down.

As if he never came down in the first place, he came down. Nor do you need to go to the grave to bring Christ up as if he had never been raised from the dead.

He has been raised from the dead. You don't need to go on a pilgrimage to a holy land. You don't need to go to a special place. Just as the Lord came down to us in the incarnation in the form of a human with the name Jesus, and just as he was brought up again out of the grave to conquer death, so through the gospel, through all of what we have just read in Romans 10, through the gospel, Jesus comes to us this very day.

[40 : 25] God comes to us in the gospel. The gospel isn't just a news article, it is the word of faith and the word of life. It is the means by which the Lord himself comes to you, reaches out to you, and says to you, come with me if you want to live.

The gospel is God reaching out personally to you, saying, come with me if you want to live. How much does he accommodate us so that there is no reason not to be saved?

It is in your heart. It is right there. Look how close it is. It is in your mouth. It is on your lips. All you need to do is believe in your heart. All you need to do is confess with your mouth.

Look how close it is. It is with you every day. You don't need to go somewhere far away. It is right here. He comes all the way to the place that you need to believe in your heart.

He comes all the way to the place that you need to confess in your mouth. He will bring the gospel right to your heart and mouth so there is no reason that you are not able to be saved, that you are not able to respond by believing and confessing and have life, eternal life.

[41 : 38] There is only one way. There always has only been one way by faith. There is only one Lord, Yahweh, Jesus, Messiah, Christ.

Anyone can have faith and call on his name to be saved and he is much closer than you think, right at your heart, right in your mouth. Jesus has come to each one of us in the gospel to say come with me if you want to live.

It is about following that person, our creator. Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth and you will be saved. And what a glorious thing and a great reassurance that for those who do this, we can have joy and life and salvation in Christ.

Amen. Let me pray. God, please help us to understand your word. Please help us to encounter you in your word.

Please help us to sense you pressing in on our hearts in such a way that we're almost ready to blurt out with our mouths in response. God, please help us to understand Paul's argument in Romans, to vitally understand that it is always only ever by faith we cannot attain righteousness by our own works.

[43 : 00] But God, please help us always remember every day how good the good news is that the Lord Jesus has come down to us from heaven and he has been raised up from the dead from the abyss and he has reached out to every one of us near to us to call us to come with him and have life in his name.

Please help us to see the truth of this. In Jesus' name, Amen.