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The Word of Faith

Romans 10.5-13

Series: The Pure Gospel

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The Village Church

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I. Introduction

- A. I've told this story on other occasions
 - 1. But it is never more appropriate than to share it again in light of the text we have before us
 - 2. It is the story of my coming to faith in Jesus Christ
- B. I grew up in a good moral home
 - 1. A home where both my mother and my father had strong moral compasses
 - a. There wasn't much gray in their world
 - b. It was always pretty clear what was right and what was wrong
- C. The home I grew up in would also have been regarded as a Christian home
 - 1. And in that generation, that meant that we attended church regularly, in fact, weekly when we were not traveling
 - 2. It is not, perhaps, the kind of home where Bible studies were held, or prayer meetings took place
 - a. If that was to happen that was the provenance of the church
 - 3. Prayer did happen in our home – usually at dinner time, where grace was always said
- D. Church was always important, however, in our family
 - 1. Our church was a little Methodist church
 - a. Located in a farming community north of Washington, D.C.
 - 2. The little town where the church was located had about a dozen houses and two significant institutions
 - a. One was a general store
 - b. A store where they sold generals!
 - c. Not really, but it was one of those stores where if you couldn't find it there, you could probably get along without it
 - d. They sold food
 - e. They sold clothing
 - f. They sold feed and fertilizer to the local farmers
 - g. They sold seed
 - 3. And the store was N.E. Hawkins and Company
 - a. N stood for Nettie – the matriarch of my family
 - b. My great grandmother
 - c. My grandfather ran the store until he retired and sold it
 - d. And he built a new house just up the street from the store

- e. Across the street from the other institution in that little town
 - f. The church
 - 4. And our family was deeply invested in that little church
 - a. It was built in the late 1800's
 - b. During a time when families would donate money to pay for the stained glass windows
 - c. And if you paid for a window, your names would be inscribed on one of the stained glass panels
 - d. Half of the stained glass windows have the name Hawkins on them
 - e. They are there to this day
 - f. About a third of the windows have the name Howes – they were cousins
 - 5. So our family was deeply invested in that community, in its two main institutions
 - a. A good, moral family
 - b. A family who would have been considered Christian
 - c. A family who had clear knowledge of right and wrong
 - d. Salt of the earth kind of people
- E. Now my immediate family didn't live in that community; we lived about four miles away
 - 1. But we still faithfully attended church there
 - a. And while the general store was still open, bought groceries there
 - b. *Had* to buy groceries there!
- F. But while I grew up attending church there, went to Sunday school there, and sang the hymns, said the liturgy, and heard the preaching – I was not a Christian
 - 1. I was a selfish little boy
 - a. A “screamer” my mother would say when I wouldn't get my way
 - 2. And even in my young teenager years, my god was sports – baseball and basketball mainly
 - 3. I went to church because, well, I had to!
- G. My brother – three years my elder – was the obedient one
 - 1. While not perfect, he certainly set high standards for me as the second child
 - 2. A good, moral child in a good, moral family
 - 3. When he was in high school he hung around with the “good” kids
 - a. And a lot of the “good” kids were Christians
 - b. Real Christians
 - c. The kind who probably did have Bible studies and prayer meetings in their homes
 - 4. And one of the things that these kids did is they attended a Youth for Christ breakfast club
 - a. And my brother attended it as well
 - b. And thought it would be a good idea for me to come along too
 - c. I believe I was about 13 or 14 years old at the time; Jr. High age
 - 5. The only trouble was that the club met on Monday mornings at 6:30 a.m.!

- a. I thought there were a lot better things to do on Monday mornings at 6:30 a.m. than go off to a breakfast club!
 - b. Things like sleep!
 - c. Teenagers need their sleep
 - 6. But my brother was persistent
 - a. He kept poking and prodding me to go
 - b. So, to get him off my back, I relented
 - 7. I got up one Monday morning and went
 - a. It wasn't that hard
 - b. It met in the Methodist church which was right behind our house
(not the one four miles away with all the stained glass windows)
 - H. And in that breakfast club we, well, ate breakfast
 - 1. But that's not the only thing we did
 - 2. We sang a couple of songs
 - 3. A couple of kids shared testimonies of how Christ met them
 - 4. And the speaker, a Youth for Christ staff member, preached a message
 - 5. A gospel message
 - I. And for the first time in my life, my eyes were opened to the good news of Jesus Christ
 - 1. All the things that we heard about in my little country church
 - 2. All the hymns that we sang
 - 3. Were finally understandable to me
 - 4. I knew, through the preaching of the word, that I was a sinner, desperately in need of a Savior
 - 5. That whatever semblance of righteousness I thought I had, was wholly inadequate
 - 6. That I was destined for an eternity of judgment – in hell (the speaker wasn't afraid to say "hell")
 - 7. But that God sent His Son, Jesus, to live the life I could never live
 - a. And that He died in my place
 - b. Taking upon Himself the punishment that I deserved
 - c. So that I could be saved from the wrath of God
 - 8. And all I needed to do was to believe in Jesus
 - a. To put my faith in Him
 - 9. And I would be saved
 - J. I thought about that meeting all day long
 - 1. And when I got home from school that day, I got down on my knees at my bedside
 - a. And asked Jesus to come into my life and save me
 - 2. And my life was never the same since
- II. Text
- A. I don't remember exactly what scripture text the speaker used that morning, but it's very possible that he used the text that we'll examine this morning
 - B. **Romans 10:5–13** (ESV) —

1. 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.
2. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down)
3. 7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).
4. 8 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);
5. 9 because, 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.
6. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
7. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."
8. 12 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.
9. 13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

III. Two Kinds of Righteousness

- A. The first thing we discover in this text is that Paul makes a distinction about two kinds of righteousness
 1. There is the righteousness of the law
 - a. And there is the righteousness of faith
- B. Romans 10:5–6 (ESV) —
 1. 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.
 2. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, ...
- C. Romans 10:9 (ESV) —
 1. 9 ... 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.
- D. This distinction between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith is another way of saying what Paul has been saying all along
 1. There is the righteousness of God
 - a. And there is our own righteousness
 2. The essence of the gospel is that the righteousness that counts is God's righteousness
 - a. And that God has provided His righteousness as a gift by His grace in Jesus Christ to all who believe
 3. Romans 3:21–22 (ESV) —
 - a. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—
 - b. 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe...
 4. "All our righteous deeds are," as Isaiah says, "like a polluted garment"

- a. Our righteousness gets us nowhere
- E. Now what Paul says about the righteousness of the law corresponds to what he says about our own righteousness
 - 1. **Romans 10:5** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law,
 - b. that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.
 - 2. Paul is referring to Leviticus 18.5
 - 3. **Leviticus 18:5** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules;
 - b. if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.
- F. God has established His law – most clearly expressed in the Ten Commandments
 - 1. And if you devote yourself to the Law, you must live by them
 - 2. In other words, if you presume that your salvation is based on your obedience to the Law of God, then you're on your own
 - a. It's all up to you!
 - b. The buck stops with you – not with Harry Truman or anyone else!
- G. But God never intended that we be saved by obedience to the Law
 - 1. How do we know that?
 - a. Even in the Old Covenant, God made provision for the sacrificial system
 - b. By which atonement could be made by the death of a substitute
 - 2. And of course, that sacrificial system was merely temporary until the promised seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent
 - a. And the Messiah would come
 - b. Perfectly fulfill the Law – which no one else could do
 - c. And pay the penalty for sin, taking upon Himself the wrath of God
- H. So, if you reject Jesus Christ, and claim that you have no need of Him
 - 1. You're saying, "Ok, I got this. I'm good enough"
 - 2. In other words, you're on your own
- I. Remember the story of the rich young man
 - 1. He asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life (**Mark 10.17-22**)
 - 2. Jesus then listed a number of the Ten Commandments
 - 3. The man claimed he had kept all of them from his youth
 - 4. **Mark 10:21-22** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."
 - b. 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
 - 5. One thing the man lacked!
 - a. He couldn't bear to part with any of his possessions
 - 6. When you rely on your own righteousness – the righteousness of the Law – you're on your own
 - a. And it will not end well

7. For, as Paul said earlier in Romans...
8. **Romans 3:23** (ESV) —
 - a. 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...
- J. The alternative to the righteousness based on the Law, to our own righteousness, is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ
 1. The righteousness based on faith
 - a. And the rest of our text explores this righteousness

IV. **The Righteousness of Faith**

- A. **Not...**
 1. The first thing Paul says about the righteousness of faith is what it is not
 2. **Romans 10:6–7** (ESV) —
 - a. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says,
 - b. “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down)
 - c. 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).
 3. Once again, Paul alludes to an Old Testament passage
 - a. This time from **Deuteronomy 30.11-14**
 - b. And he applies it to Jesus Christ
 4. In Deuteronomy, Moses teaches that the message of God is completely accessible to His people
 - a. You don’t have to go up to heaven and get it and bring it down
 - b. And you don’t have to go into the abyss, or to the end of the sea, and bring it up
 5. And Paul applies it to Christ
 - a. The message of the gospel is not that we have to ascend into heaven and bring down the righteousness ourselves
 - b. Why not?
 - c. Because God has already brought it down to us in Jesus Christ
 6. And not only that, we do not have to go down into the depths to bring it up to us either
 - a. And Paul says, to bring Christ up from the dead
 - b. Why not?
 - c. Because God has already done that too!
 - d. God has raised Jesus from the dead!
 7. It’s interesting, to deny these two elements of God’s working is a denial of two fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith
 - a. The doctrine of the incarnation
 - b. The doctrine of the life, death and resurrection
 8. God has sent the Righteous One to us from above
 - a. We don’t have to go to heaven to get the righteousness that we need
 - b. God has sent us His Son
 - c. His love gift to all those who will believe in Him

9. And God's Son live the righteous life that we could never live, died on the cross to pay for our sins, and was raised from the dead by the Father
 - a. So we don't have to go into the grave either
 - b. God did that for us as well!
10. Ultimately, as John MacArthur loved to say (whom we lost just this past week)
 - a. There are only two kinds of religion in the world
 - b. The religion of human achievement
 - c. And the religion of divine accomplishment
 - d. The biblical religion is a religion of divine accomplishment
 - e. God has done it!
 - f. He has sent His Son – the Righteous One
 - g. And He has raised Him from the dead
 - h. All other religions – well, you're on your own
 - i. You have to do it yourself
 - j. And the trouble is – you can't
 - k. It's impossible to measure up to the righteousness of God on your own

B. **The Nearness of the Word**

1. The second thing Paul says about the righteousness based on faith is positive
 - a. It is not something impossible – going up to heaven to bring Christ down
 - b. Or going into the abyss to bring Christ up from the dead
2. **Romans 10:8** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 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);
3. Once again, quoting from the Deuteronomy passage
 - a. It speaks of the nearness, the accessibility of the gospel
4. The word of faith is near you
 - a. In your mouth!
 - b. And in your heart!
5. Now I admit that I have a disability
 - a. It's a disability, I'm told, is one I share with other husbands
 - b. Jean can tell me to go find something
 - c. And I can go where she tells me to go
 - d. Look right at it
 - e. And not see it
6. “Would go to the refrigerator and get the tomato?”
 - a. “Sure, hon”
 - b. I go, spend 5 minutes looking in the refrigerator, and cannot find the tomato
 - c. “Hon, there's no tomato in the fridge”
 - d. “Oh yes there is”
 - e. She goes, opens the door, pulls it right out

- f. And might say something like, “If it was a snake, it would have bitten you!”
- 7. Well, the gospel’s like that
 - a. It’s right there
 - b. It’s simple
 - c. It’s clear
 - d. Why can’t you see it?
- 8. I went to that little country church all through childhood
 - a. And I’m sure the gospel was in there somewhere
 - b. In the liturgy
 - c. In the hymns
 - d. Maybe even in the preaching – although that wasn’t the best church to hear good gospel preaching
 - e. But it was in there somewhere
- 9. But no – I never saw it
 - a. Not until I went to the Youth for Christ breakfast and finally saw it
 - b. Saw that I was a sinner
 - c. Saw that God had sent a Savior
 - d. Saw that Jesus had paid the penalty for my sin
 - e. Saw that Jesus rose from the dead
 - f. Saw that all I needed to do was believe in Christ
- 10. It was this close!
 - a. Geographically, right behind my house
 - b. But more than that – it was what I was hearing all through childhood
 - c. Right there
 - d. There for the taking!

C. **Believing**

- 1. **Romans 10:8–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 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);
 - b. 9 because, 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.
 - c. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- 2. This is the gospel!
 - a. Two elements
 - b. Believing and confessing
 - c. Believing in your heart, inwardly, in the very core of your being
 - d. Confessing without your mouth, outwardly, publicly
- 3. Now the text is interesting
 - a. Both elements are expressed twice
 - b. And the order is different in each case
- 4. First, it’s confessing, then believing

- a. “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord...”
 - b. “... and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead”
5. But then, the second time, believing comes first
 - a. “For with the heart one believes and is justified...”
 - b. “... and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”
6. So let’s not get tied up on knots over the order – believing or confessing
 - a. Paul is not teaching a particular order – though it’s pretty evident that one must believe inwardly before one confesses outwardly
 - b. He’s just indicating that both are necessary
7. Believing is necessary
 - a. You’re not saved because your parents took you to church as a child – like I was
 - b. You’re not saved because you were baptized
 - c. You’re not saved because your father was a preacher
 - d. You’re not saved because your mother was a godly woman
 - e. No – you, yourself, must believe to be saved
8. As someone once said, just because you’re in a garage doesn’t make you a car
 - a. You can be in church all your life, and if you don’t believe – that is, trust Jesus Christ alone for your salvation – Jesus will say to you on the day of judgment, “I never knew you” (Matthew 7.21-23)
9. Now the organ of belief is said to be the heart
 - a. That’s not talking about the blood pump that is so important in your physical health
 - b. The heart is the core of the human person
 - c. It is the seat of all our affections
 - d. It is core values of our minds
 - e. It is the essence of our wills
10. So believing means that every element of our human faculties is engaged in trusting Christ
11. Biblical faith is said by the theologians to have three elements – and just because theologians want to make things seem complicated, they express them in Latin
 - a. **Notitia – the content of faith**; that is, understanding in at least a basic way, is the person of Jesus and what he has done
 - b. **Assensus – agreement with the content**; intellectual assent regarding who Jesus is
 - c. **Fiducia – trust**; an act of the will in placing your trust in Jesus alone as your Savior (we get our English word fiduciary from fiducia)
12. Analogy of the chair
 - a. Chair can be defined – piece of furniture with legs, a seat and a back (notitia)
 - b. Do you agree that this is a chair? (assensus)
 - c. Am I trusting in the chair now? (fiducia)

- d. I must sit in the chair
 - e. I must place my weight on the chair and allow the chair to hold me up
13. So, by faith, I must
- a. Know who Jesus is
 - b. Agree with the Bible, and with Jesus, in the testimony that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God
 - c. And that He has lived the righteous life that I could never live
 - d. That He has died in my place on the cross, paying the penalty for my sins
 - e. And was raised by God
 - f. But ultimately, I must trust in Jesus alone, and no one or nothing else
14. That's believing; that's faith
15. I got up that Monday morning an unbeliever
- a. Reluctantly, I went to the breakfast
 - b. I heard about Christ
 - c. I can't tell you what it was that convinced me
 - d. But at the end of the day, I was a believer
16. Now having studied the scriptures, I understand more of what happened that day as a teenager
- a. The Spirit of God took the word of God, and changed my selfish, rebellious heart
 - b. And I was born again; born of the Spirit
17. Now there are two things about believing that the text tells us
- a. One – you must believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead
 - b. So the resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to what it means to be a Christian
 - c. This is a real resurrection – not a figment of some apostle's imagination
 - d. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, really was human; He really was killed through the crucifixion; He was all dead, not mostly dead
 - e. And He really did come back to life after having paid the penalty of our sin
18. Secondly, when you believe, you are justified
- a. We've already studied justification extensively in Romans
 - b. By faith in Jesus Christ, God declares us righteous
 - c. God takes the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, and He places it into our account
 - d. He imputes the righteousness of Christ to us
 - e. So that when He looks to us, He sees Christ
 - f. We're still sinners; but as the scripture says, God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4.5)
19. So – believing

- a. Faith
 - b. Central to what it means to be a Christian
- D. **Confessing**
 - 1. And then there is confessing
 - 2. **Romans 10:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord ... 10 and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - 3. The key issue in this issue of confessing is that Jesus is Lord
 - 4. “Lord” is **kurios (Gk)**
 - a. It is the word that the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint, uses to translate the name of God – Yahweh
 - 5. When we speak about Jesus and confess Him as Lord, we are declaring His deity
 - a. Jesus Christ is God!
 - 6. You must not be fuzzy about this
 - a. Who is it that you confess?
 - b. Jesus as Lord
 - 7. In fact, the very first confession of faith in the early church was simply, “Jesus is Lord” (**1 Corinthians 12.3**)
 - 8. There is a false teaching out there that you can take Jesus as Savior but not as Lord
 - a. Taking Him as Lord is either a later experience, or is not necessary to be a Christian
 - b. That’s false!
 - 9. You cannot be saved unless you confess Jesus is Lord
 - a. You see, you’re not trusting in part of Jesus when you trust Christ
 - b. You either take Him whole or not at all!
 - 10. The other observation we can make is that, in the final analysis, there are no secret Christians
 - a. You must believe in your heart
 - b. And you must confess with your mouth
 - 11. **Matthew 10:32–33** (ESV) —
 - a. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,
 - b. 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.
 - 12. Now there are many ways we can confess with our mouths
 - a. One is simply by worshiping
 - b. Singing the hymns is a confession of Jesus as Lord
 - c. Another is by baptism
 - d. When we baptize people, we hear their public testimony
 - e. Have you been baptized?
 - f. We can share Jesus with our neighbors; testify what Jesus has done for us in saving us from our sins

- g. However we do that, we must not only believe, but also confess Him as Lord
- 13. Once I knelt by my bed and asked Jesus to save me, I had to tell someone
 - a. So I went and told my mother
 - b. Actually, it didn't go all that well!
 - c. I'm not sure she believed me
 - d. Remember, to her, I was the screamer!
 - e. Of the two of us boys, I was the rebellious one
 - f. I'm sure she wanted to see some further evidence
- 14. But it wouldn't be the last time I confessed Jesus before my mother
 - a. For you see, she was not a believer then either
 - b. Even though she went to church all her life, she dabbled in all kinds of other things – like reincarnation, Christian Science
 - c. As a young Christian I had many discussions with my mother about Jesus
 - d. (Jean might say arguments!)
 - e. She knew the truth about Jesus from those conversations
 - f. She could acknowledge who Jesus was and what He did
 - g. But she could not trust Him as her Savior
- 15. But when she was dying of cancer, on her final weekend
 - a. We had one final conversation even as her lungs were beginning to fill with fluid
 - b. And she knew what she had to do
 - c. And she believed
 - d. And she confessed that Jesus was her Savior

E. **The Assurance of Faith**

- 1. Finally, in this passage we have the assurance of faith
- 2. **Romans 10:10–13** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - b. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”
 - c. 12 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.
 - d. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- 3. Believe, confess – and you will be saved
 - a. Again, Paul quotes from the OT – twice!
 - b. From **Joel 2.32**
- 4. And what great assurance!
 - a. “Everyone”
 - b. “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame”
 - c. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”
- 5. Now in Romans we’ve talked recently a lot about the sovereignty of God in salvation

- a. We've studied the doctrine of election
 - b. And you might have concluded that that doctrine is restrictive; that not everyone is given an opportunity
 - c. That would be a false conclusion on your part
- 6. This is a universal offer of the gospel
 - a. No distinction between Jew and Greek
 - b. The same Lord is Lord of all
- 7. In fact, no distinction in any category
 - a. Jew or Greek
 - b. Male or female
 - c. Slave or free
- 8. Whatever sin you've committed
 - a. Major or minor
 - b. Egregious or peccadillo
 - c. Liar or murderer
 - d. Cheat on your taxes or embezzle millions
 - e. There is hope for you too
 - f. You too can be saved if you trust Jesus alone for your salvation
- 9. Even religion
 - a. Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim – even Satanist
 - b. If you trust in Jesus Christ alone you will be saved!
 - c. You can leave behind your religion of human accomplishment and be saved!
 - d. Even Christian
 - e. Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, Catholic, C&MA
 - f. That's right – if you've been trusting in your church membership, or your baptism, or anything other than Christ, you too can cast yourself on the mercy of Jesus alone and be saved!
 - g. If you trust in a religion of your own righteousness, a religion of works – you too can be saved
 - h. But you persist in relying on the law – you're on your own
- F. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?