

Review: *From your experience at the Cornerstone meeting last week, share something that helped build your faith.*

DAY ONE

Read Romans 10:6-8

NOTE: Last week's lesson ended with Romans 10:5: Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, "the person who does these things will live by them." While Paul is confirming that the law is a path to righteousness, nobody is perfect. As we learned in Romans 3:23 everybody sins: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Now Paul continues to speak from the Old Testament, quoting verses from Deuteronomy to lead his readers to the gospel, the path to Christ.

1. In verses 6-8 Paul quotes from the beautiful verses in Deuteronomy 30:10-14 which assured the Israelites that the word of God is never too far away or too hard to follow. Read Deuteronomy 30:10-14 and record verse 14.
2. Paul insists that Israel cannot escape responsibility for obeying the word of the gospel, as though it were forced to look high and low for Christ. (*Ignatius Study Bible*) With what brief phrases does Paul relate the fact that we don't have to look high and low for Christ?
3. In these verses from Deuteronomy Moses is exhorting the Israelites, before they entered the Promised Land, to follow Yahweh's commands and he was reassuring them of the Lord's faithfulness. "Righteousness that comes from faith" in Christ does not require climbing into heaven or descending into the depths of the abyss. That work has been done by Jesus. In faith, we can simply go through "the door." Read and record John 10:9.
4. In verse 8, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:14. The "word of faith" to which he is referring is no longer the word of the laws of the Torah. How would you explain/define Paul's use of the phrase "word of faith?"

5. Refer to the Commentary on Paul's use of "Substitution Theology." One example Msgr. Mikesch notes is that in Deuteronomy 30:14, Moses said that the word of the law is "in your mouth and in your heart." How does he say Paul substitutes (interprets) this?

NOTE: For Paul, what is true of the Mosaic law is true of the Messiah, since the law points the way to Christ (Romans 10:4) The gospel is not inaccessible to the Jews or beyond their reach... The saving word of God is more accessible than ever: in the incarnation, Christ came down from the Father; in the resurrection, Christ was brought up from the dead; in the preaching of the apostles, the word of faith has come near; and in the Christian confession of faith, the word can be found in your mouth and in your heart. *Hahn and Mitch*

6. CONNECTION: Today's verses confirm the importance of the word of God; both the word of the Gospel and the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Throughout scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, we find holy inspiration. "No matter how many times we hear or read a passage, there's always something new in it, something applicable to our lives, something that sheds light on our personal problems or on the challenges that the Church is facing in our time – but more than that, it is a word of life, a word of love, a word of wisdom that elicits an ongoing conversion in our hearts and directs our footsteps." (*Homily, Archbishop William E. Lori 1/26/20*) Share with your group a favorite inspirational scripture passage and your reason for choosing it.

A hymn familiar to The Cornerstone is titled "Ancient Words." One verse states "Words of life, words of hope, give us strength, help us cope in this world, where e'er we roam, ancient words will guide us home." Let these words lead you into prayer.

DAY TWO

Read Romans 10:9-11

NOTE: Growth in faith occurs through works: of prayer, of charity, and of faith itself. It is God who sanctifies us, but we have to commit our freedom to *his work*. This is the Catholic doctrine of works and cooperation. And so we can say with St. James: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead." (2:26) *Bonagura, "Faith or Works: A Different Approach"*

7a. Today's lesson begins with one of the most familiar verses in Paul's Letter to the Romans. Read and record verse 9, which completes the thought begun in verse 8 regarding the nearness of the word of God. (Good memory verse)

b. Record the definition of "evangelization." Briefly note how it applies to verse 9.

8. Share some reasons why you think it is important to “confess with the lips” rather than simply believing in our hearts.

9. “The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ and through Baptism.” (*CCC 1987*) Thus, by justification we mean the passing of the soul from the state of sin, whether original or mortal, to the state of grace. Beyond the Sacrament of Baptism, what else can lead us to a similar state of grace?

10. Paul continues in verse 10 to confirm our need to proclaim the Word. He begins by saying “For one believes with the heart and so is justified...” How does he end this verse?

THINK: Paul challenges his readers to listen with their hearts. Verse 10 is so simple. We can almost hear Paul say to this Jewish people, “Please trust. Trust that what I am telling you about Jesus and faith and righteousness is true. Trust that God is a loving Father, not a harsh judge. Trust that you are loved.” Paul is opening his heart to his people and he longs for them to be willing to receive the love God wishes to give them. *Commentary*

11. Verse 11 is a translation of Isaiah 28:16. (We read this verse previously in Romans 9:33). Scholars suggest shame refers to the disgrace of final condemnation. (*Hahn and Mitch*) What do you think is meant by “the disgrace of final condemnation?”

12. CONNECTION: Today’s readings remind us of two necessary and interrelated parts of faith. There is “belief” in the heart and “confession” with the lips. Our faith is a gift from God. The words of faith must come from our hearts and the heart’s conviction must be expressed and confirmed by the words that we speak and the actions we take in love. As stated in *Dynamic Catholic (Matthew Kelly)*: “We need to give people the Bread of Life as well as a sandwich. Actively sharing the faith in both these ways, and in love, is good and necessary.” Share a way in which you evangelize by word or action.

There is a cohesion between “the Great Commission” (to carry the Gospel to the whole world) and “the second Greatest Commandment” (to love one’s neighbor). Together these help us to fulfill the Greatest Commandment, to love God with all of your being. Write a prayer today asking God to help you fulfill his commands with love in your heart, in your mind, on your lips, and in all that you do.

DAY THREE

Read Romans 10:12-15

NOTE: When Paul says that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, he is not talking about culture; rather, equality in God's eyes. This statement reinforces Paul's statements in Romans 3:9, 23 and 29, indicating God is "the God of all nations, not just the God of the Jews."
Hahn and Mitch

13. In verse 12 of today's study Paul says that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. Paul wanted so badly to unite the two cultures into a cohesive body in the Roman Christian community. Briefly describe a successful example of an effort to unite multiple cultures from our world today.

THINK: Do you have multiple cultures in your parish? Is your parish successful in unifying these cultures? Why or why not? Is there anything you can do to grow or improve this situation?

14. Paul then quotes Joel 2:32 saying, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Though this verse referred to the God of Israel (Yahweh), Paul applies the passage directly to Jesus as Lord, just as Peter did in Acts 2:21, 36. *Hahn and Mitch*
Record Acts 2:36.

15. In verse 14 Paul suggests three obstacles to calling on or being called by God. Complete the following:

But how are they to call on one
And how are they to believe in one
And how are they to hear without

16. According to verse 15, if a person is to proclaim the good news, they must first be sent. What do you think "sent" represents in this context?

NOTE: St. Paul writes: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Salvation comes from hearing God's word and responding in faith: "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). But the Apostle goes on to ask: "How are men then to call upon him ... of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14-15) The same questions which St. Paul asked in his Letter to the Romans must be asked again today. Who will bring the Good News? How can there be evangelization without evangelizers? *Pope Saint John Paul II (Homily, August 10, 1993)*

17. Paul next quotes Isaiah 52:7. "Paul wants us to see that Isaiah's prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in the apostles taking the gospel to the world as missionaries." (*Hahn and Mitch*)
Record verse 15.

18. CONNECTION: In today's lesson we realize that in order for people to believe, someone must be sent to proclaim the good news to them. Isaiah remarks about the messenger's (missionary's) feet – “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” We can use our feet to bring the good news to others or we can be still, hold back and keep silent. Jesus commanded us to carry his word to the ends of the earth. Who is a “messenger” who has brought Good News to you? Or have you been a messenger to others? How has either of these gifts affected your faith journey?

There may be those in your life who will never hear the gospel unless it's **your** “feet that bring the good news” to them. The mission field is all around you. Let this thought lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 10:16-18

19. In verse 16 Paul shows that it was foretold long ago that only some of the people of Israel would believe in Jesus, the Davidic Messiah, when he came; but “as foretold by the prophets, he will fulfill Old Testament prophecy by gathering together ‘all Israel’ as well as the Gentiles under his messianic reign.” It is in this context that Paul sees his own mission as an apostle of Christ. (*Hahn and Shea*) Record the words repeated by Paul from Isaiah 53:1.

20. In verse 17 Paul states, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” Read and record Mark 16:15.

21. In verse 18 Paul challenges the Jewish unbelievers. What question does he pose and what answer does he give?

22. In your own words, explain how the Jews have indeed heard.

23. Read and record one or more of the following and note how it supports Paul's words:

Psalm 71:8

Luke 24:27

Hebrews 2:12

24. **CONNECTION:** Our verses today speak of hearing, proclaiming and believing. Although Christ is not visibly present in the same way he was present during his public ministry, he is still present in his Church. He has called each of us to be his voice to his people. In our baptism we are anointed as prophets, proclaimers of God's word. We have so many opportunities to speak God's word. Briefly describe one time in the last few weeks when you did just that - said something to someone which you believe was God's word for them. (And be mindful of the opportunities in the coming week to share God's Word with others.)

We may not always recognize when the Lord calls us to be his voice. Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10. Reflect on this thought in your prayer today.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 10:19-21

25. As today's lesson begins, Paul asks another question. Record verse 19.

26. Paul next uses the words of Moses found in Deuteronomy 32:21 to arouse his fellow Jews. For what purpose might God want to make the Israelites jealous and angry?

27. What is the "nation" to which Paul refers in verse 19?

28. What undeserved blessings did the Gentiles receive from God according to verse 20?

29. Paul believes that the situation is not hopeless for Israel. In verse 21 what image of God do you see portrayed in the passage from Isaiah 65:2?

30. **CONNECTION:** Many of the Gentiles had not even heard of the Messiah, but then came to believe in him. On the other hand, many of the Jews not only knew of the prophecies but had longed for the Messiah's coming throughout history. Like so many in Paul's day, smart and sensitive people may still be blind or deaf to God's Word, but they may be exactly the one touched by God's Word through you.

Record some ways that you think you can effectively reach out to people and share the Good News without offending them or making them uncomfortable?

Pray today for the wisdom, grace, courage and opportunity to speak God's Word to others, in his time and in his way.

DAY SIX

Read Romans 11:1-4

31. In chapter 11 Paul now stresses that he has confidence that Israel's unbelief is temporary. What can we surmise about Israel's relationship with God from Paul's opening question and answer in verse 1?

32. Paul identifies himself in three ways in verse 1 as: an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Why might Paul make a point of his heritage?

NOTE: During the Exodus, Benjaminites grew from 35,400 (Numbers 1:37) to 45,600 (Numbers 26:41); following the conquest of Canaan the territory assigned to Benjamin was south of the territory of Ephraim and north of the territory of Judah (Josh 18:11-28)...The territory of Benjamin was included in the kingdom of Judah after the division of the kingdom of Solomon (1 Kings 12:21-24). *Catholic Bible Dictionary*

33. In verse 2 Paul wants to reassure his readers that God has not rejected Israel even though most of the Israelites have rejected Christ. Read [Acts 9:3-7](#) and [Acts 9:15-16](#). How is Paul (Saul) himself an example of God's mercy towards the Jews?

34. In verse 3 Paul quotes the prophet Elijah. Read [1 Kings 19:9-10](#) to see what the scripture says of Elijah. What complaints did Elijah have against the Israelites of his day?

35. In Jewish history the idol worship of Baal was symbolic of Israel's ongoing unfaithfulness to the one true God. What was God's response to Elijah concerning these people according to verse 4?

NOTE: To the Jews the number 7000 was very significant. Seven is symbolic of perfection and totality multiplied by 1000 which is symbolic of a huge number—something too large to be counted.

36. CONNECTION: In today's readings Paul gives the assurance that there will be Jews who remain faithful to the good news of Jesus in spite of the wide scale rejection of the majority. This is a message of hope for us as well. Even when it looks like our world has forgotten God, there is a remnant of believers who remain faithful. Do you sometimes find yourself in situations in which you feel like the only believer in the room? Describe one such situation and how you handled it or could have handled it.

Throughout history there have been many times when God's people have had lapses in faithfulness. The words of God quoted by Elijah in verse 4 of today's passage can give you hope. With this in mind, write a hope-filled prayer for our world today.

Read pages 78-81 in the Commentary by Rev. Msgr. Gregory R. Mikesch, M.Div., M.A. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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