

Everyone Who Believes Will Be Saved
Message 2 of 6 in the series "Romans: Christianity 101 (Part 2)"

A. In AD 57, Paul wrote a letter to Christians he'd never met living in ancient Rome.

1. A number of Jews who had become believers in Jerusalem after Pentecost had fled to Rome to escape religious persecution. Even though they'd had very little religious instruction, they established thriving churches there by sharing the gospel with their Gentile friends and neighbors. "But the believers who were scattered (by persecution) **preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.**"
Acts 8:4 (NLT)
2. Paul sent this "Christianity 101" letter to help the Christians in Rome grow spiritually strong. "This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News... I am writing to all of you in Rome who are **loved by God and are called to be his own holy people**... I long to visit you so I can... **help you grow strong in the Lord.**" Romans 1:1, 7a, & 11 (NLT)

B. Paul wanted all the believers in Rome, both Jew and Gentile, to understand that the only way to be made right with God is by placing our faith in Jesus, NOT by trying harder to be good.

"For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. **The law simply shows us how sinful we are.** But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. **We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.** And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. **For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood." Romans 3:20-25a (NLT)

1. During his missionary journeys, Paul had seen Gentiles everywhere gladly accept the Good News about Jesus. But he'd also experienced violent opposition to the Good News from his own people, the Jews. "Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, 'It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But **since you have rejected it** and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles...' When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers. So the Lord's message spread throughout that region. **Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town.**"
Acts 13:46, & 48-50 (NLT)
2. Paul was grieved that his fellow Jews viewed Jesus as a stumbling block due to their misdirected zeal. "God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, '**I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.**' Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. **I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal.** For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God." Romans 9:33-10:4 (NLT) (*Isaiah 8:14 & 28:16*)

IMPORTANT! It is possible to be very sincere and sincerely wrong. "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one can come to the Father except through me.**'" John 14:6 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus became a stumbling block for the Jews in Paul's day for many of the same reasons He is a stumbling block for people today:

- Jesus doesn't fit our expectations of the Messiah. "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?" Matthew 9:11b (NLT)
- Salvation by faith seems too easy. "These **rules may seem wise** because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires." Colossians 2:23 (NLT)
- Jesus asks us to surrender our own way to Him. "If any of you wants to be my follower, **you must give up your own way**, take up your cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23b (NLT)

C. Paul wanted all the believers in Rome to know that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

1. We don't need to perform heroic deeds. "For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, 'Don't say in your heart, "Who will go up to heaven?" (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, "Who will go down to the place of the dead?" (to bring Christ back to life again).' In fact, it says, 'The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.'"

Romans 10:5-8a (NLT) (*Leviticus 18:5, Deuteronomy 30:12-14*)

2. We do need to declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead. "And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: **If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.' Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For **'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'**"

Romans 10:8b-13 (NLT) (*Isaiah 28:16, Joel 2:32*)

IMPORTANT! Lord = "Boss." "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?" Luke 6:46 (NLT)

3. We need to do our part in spreading the Good News all around the whole world. "But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And **how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?** And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, 'How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!' But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' **So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.**" Romans 10:14-17(NLT) (*Isaiah 52:7 & 53:1*)

D. Paul wanted all the believers in Rome to know that God hasn't given up on the Jewish people.

"I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. **No, God has not rejected his own people**, whom he chose from the very beginning." Romans 11:1-2a (NLT)

1. God has preserved a remnant of faithful Jewish believers. "Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said, 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.' And do you remember God's reply? He said, 'No, I have 7,000 others who have never bowed down to Baal!' **It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful** because of God's grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them." Romans 11:2b-5 (NLT) (*1 Kings 19:10-18*)
2. God wants the Jewish people to become jealous of how He is working in and through the lives of Gentiles. "Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the Gentiles. **But he wanted his own people to become jealous** and claim it for themselves." Romans 11:11 (NLT)
3. There will be a future great awakening among the Jewish people causing many to surrender their lives to Christ. "I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but **this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ.** And so all Israel will be saved." Romans 11:25-26a (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Read Acts 8:1-4. Why do you think God allowed a great wave of persecution to come upon the church in Jerusalem? Describe a time in your life when God used difficult circumstances to get you moving.
2. Read Romans 1:1-11. How does it make you feel to know that God used Christians with far less Christian knowledge/resources than most of us have to plant thriving churches in ancient Rome?
3. Discuss the following reasons Jesus was and still is a "stumbling block" for many people: (Romans 9:33-10:4, Isaiah 8:14 & 28:16)

- Jesus doesn't fit our expectations of the Messiah. (Matthew 9:9-13)
 - Salvation by faith seems too easy. (Colossians 2:20-23)
 - Jesus asks us to surrender our own way to Him. (Luke 9:23-25)
4. Paul said, "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) When and where did you first openly declare that Jesus was Lord over your life?
 5. Read Romans 10:14-17. What's your part in spreading the Good News of Jesus all around the world? How can we work on this together at Centerpoint?
 6. Read Romans 11:1-5 & 11, & 1 Kings 19:1-10 & 18. How does it make you feel to hear about God preserving a remnant of faithful Jewish believers? Would it make any Jews jealous to see how God is working in our lives?
 7. Read Acts 13:42-52 & Philippians 3:4-8. Have you ever been asked to leave some place because of your faith in Jesus? How do you think it made Paul feel to be kicked out of a synagogue?