

## JOURNEY DOWN THE ROMANS ROAD PT 1

To have faith is to share it. If you have a genuine faith and belief in the good news of the gospel it becomes not only a burden of responsibility but a privilege and pleasure to share it (**Rom 1:16**). While we can agree that it is not always the easiest thing to do it is certainly most necessary.

Sharing our faith, “the faith”, with others can be done in a multitude of ways; our living and lifestyle, telling our personal conversion story, praying for others, giving to the cause of the gospel. However, we cannot live Christian lives as “*disciples*” and not be intentional about sharing the message of the cross (**Mt 28:19-20, 1 Cor 1:18**).

In sharing our faith, every Christian should know the essential or fundamental tenets of the gospel and be able to explain its message. Yet, many of us struggle with knowing what passages or truths to reference when sharing the gospel, or they know a few basic truths like, “Jesus died for your sins,” or “God loves you.”

While those are true statements, we must be able to go a little bit deeper (**1 Ptr 3:15**). Not so deep that it becomes confusing, but deep enough to give them a chance to come to their own faith (**Rom 10:17**). This is the ultimate goal of preaching, teaching, sharing the gospel: To encourage men and women to make a decision for Jesus Christ, for salvation and in daily living.

This is why He places us in strategic positions, for influence, not privilege. God calls each of us to different tasks and endows us with different gifts, but the goal is the same – the salvation of the lost (1 Cor 12:6–7; Luke 19:10). We may not have the gift of evangelism, but again, we certainly have the responsibility.

We have neighbors, coworkers, friends, and relatives who need to hear the good news about Jesus and in many instances, we are the ones tasked with being the source of influence. This Journey Down the Romans Road will equip us with a memorable method of sharing the essence of the gospel message in an impactful way.

Romans Road is an easy systematic way of explaining the message of salvation. In its simplest form, it is an evangelistic tool that lays out the plan of salvation through a series of verses from the book of Romans. There are many different versions of Romans Road with slight variations in Scriptures, but the basic message and method is the same.

When arranged in order, these 5 verses walk people through their eternal separation from God, the consequences of human sin, the substitutionary death of Jesus, the human response to God’s offer of salvation, and a description of salvation’s availability. In other words, who needs salvation, why we need salvation, How God provides salvation, and How we receive salvation.

1. **Romans 3:10, 23** As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
2. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. **Romans 5:8** But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
4. **Romans 10:9-11** 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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
5. **Romans 10:13** For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

The first step along this road to redemption is understanding that no one is righteous, no one is good, and no one keeps the “Commandments” perfectly (**Rom 3:10-12**). As much as we could try, without Christ, whoever fails to keep the whole law in one point is accountable for all of it according to God’s standard (**James 2:10**).

This is why salvation is good news, even though it comes to us against the backdrop of bad news. The bad news; We are all sinners. No one on earth, past, present or future, is without sin. The Greek word for sin literally means to miss the mark. It describes a Bowman who drew back his string, released his arrow, but failed to hit the bullseye.

Similarly, sin involves missing the target or in other words falling short of God's standard of holiness and righteousness (**Rom 3:23**). Even our attempts at being right or doing right for our own sake fall short (**Isaiah 64:6**). The unfortunate reality for all of us is that there is not a single person who has not missed that mark at some time or another.

We often try to treat or define sin by varying degrees to suggest that some sin is worse than others. As easy as it would be to suggest that murder is worse than telling a white lie sin looks different from God's perspective. From his vantage point, there is no way to measure it by degree.

Either we fall short of God's glory or we don't. The word glory means to put something on display, to show it off. Sin is missing the mark, and the mark is to properly put God on display. Anytime we have ever done anything that did not reveal accurately who and what God is, anytime we fail to reflect the character of God, then we have sinned and have missed the mark.

The best approach is to present what the apostle Paul called the “whole counsel of God” which includes both the bad news about our natural state and the good news about God’s plan to redeem us. Jesus never eliminated either of these when He brought “peace on earth, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14). His peace is available to everyone who is brought to repentance by the “bad news” and joyfully accepts the “good news” that He is Lord of all (Rom 10:8–9).

## JOURNEY DOWN THE ROMANS ROAD PT 2

Many today don't consider themselves as "sinners" but as good people, especially in comparison with others they consider less worthy than they. And most try to find an alternative path to heaven, believing that their 'good' deeds, generosity, and acts of kindness will earn them enough favor with God to make it in.

Unfortunately, from God's perspective, no one is good enough to merit forgiveness of sin through their good own works (Rom 3:10). This is because, in Adam, humanity is a fallen race (Rom 5:12). Therefore, not one man has ever lived who is deserving of forgiveness of sin and the salvation of their soul. We are ALL sinners in need of salvation (Rom 3:23).

Having taken that first step or stop on the road to redemption may help a person readily accept that everyone is a sinner, but the next one takes us further into the bad news before sharing the ultimate good news. This second stop helps us discover that the penalty for our sinful nature is death; potentially physical, but more importantly spiritual.

This defines the consequences of our sin, which are twofold: Because of our sin, it's nature and our participation or practice, our earthly lives are destined to end. Certainly, physical death is a part of the natural course of life. More importantly, our sin leads to eternal death, which is eternal separation from God. Both are caused by the prevailing power of sin.

As we share this truth that "the wages of sin is death," this second stop provides us with the opportunity to highlight God's wrath towards sin (Rom 6:23). It also helps us to understand His dealings with the unrighteous and the reality of a literal heaven and a literal hell, both of which are options for every individual (Is 66:1; Rev 21:8).

As most understand the concept of wages as something that we earn, pushing a bit further, if we have worked for wages, then we deserve to be paid. And unfortunately, from God's view the sin that we work at, both as unbelievers and believers, deserve to be compensated for and the only compensation is death.

Much like a human court system has a standard of law that if not kept leads to punishment, God has a law and there is punishment for not keeping it. More than that, as human beings who readily admit that we are sinners, we must also admit that we cannot keep God's law faithfully. This is why we cling to the grace and mercy available in Christ.

As unbelievers there is no human compensation that can pay for or atone for the sin debt that we owe, or that must be paid in blood (Mt 26:27-28; Heb 9:22). This substitutionary act by Jesus Christ has covered the debt that we owe and is what positions us to be able to receive eternal life and the blessings that come with it (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:5).

After we have put our faith in Christ, it is still possible to experience the symptoms of spiritual death. Our eternity is secure and we will not be separated from God in hell (Jn 10:27-29). However, when we live out of our old natures rather than out of our new natures (2 Cor 5:17), we experience a sense of separation from God.

This is very similar to what occurs when a child disobeys a parent. The child's status as a family member and the parent's love for the child do not change. However, the vitality of their

relationship is damaged. Thankfully, while we may still experience the natural consequences of our sins, our fellowship with God can be restored. (Lk 15:24).

Essentially, all we need do is confess our sins and turn back to God (1 Jn 1:9). Make no mistake about it, our sin, even as believers, hurts the heart of God and grieves His Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Though it does not sever our relationship with Him, our sin does put a barrier between us.

If you haven't noticed, we live in an age of rebellion and self-sufficiency where everyone wants to do their own thing and make their own decisions. No one wants to be told what to do or have their ability to choose or decide restricted. Many think if they do what they want to do, they are free from God's restrictions and are not serving anyone.

Paul says such people are still slaves, they just have a different master; Sin (Jn 8:32-34; Rom 6:16). We all select the influence to which we are willing to submit and it will influence how we think. Union with Christ at salvation forever influences what we think of sin and the more or less we are connected to Him will be the determining factor thereof.

The fact is that everyone is a servant, and everyone is free. The question is who or what are you serving, and who or what are you free from? (1 Cor 7:22-24) You are a servant to whomever you obey: sin or God! You may be free from God; But if so you are a servant of sin, to be free from sin, you must serve God.

The truth is you can only serve one master at a time and there are only two masters to choose from; sin that leads to death or righteousness of Christ that leads to life. Our reward depends on whom we serve. Just as there are only two masters, there are only two rewards. One is a wage earned; eternal separation. The other is a gift given; eternal life and bliss.

### JOURNEY DOWN THE ROMANS ROAD PT 3

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **Roman 5:8**

Understanding the depravity of man, as our human dilemma, as presented in the first two stops on the Romans road leads us to the need for a solution. Because we are ultimately sinful, in our human nature, and only deserving of death as the penalty earned by our actions, we need help in soothing and appeasing God’s wrath toward sin (**Is 13:6-9**).

This is why when we discover our sinful state, even as believers, we should run straight to God instead of running from Him as we are prone to do. When we are sorry for what we have done, instead of going to God and dealing with it we many times act just like kids usually do. Out of fear, we try to hide it, or at least ignore it, and just get farther and farther away from God.

Fortunately for us, the only thing more powerful than God’s wrath is God’s love for us as His creation, created in His image, and for His purpose (**Eph 2:4-10; 1 John 4:8,16**). This presents for us as truth that is difficult for many to understand, that a loving and holy God loves us despite us and in spite of our misinterpretation of His love.

That is the most important truth in sharing the Romans Road to Salvation. With as hard as it is to wrap our minds around at times it is true: God absolutely loves you. This is where the faith journey starts: helping others understand that “God loves you”. Without having an assurance of God’s love, the faith journey will not last long.

There is no force more powerful than the love our heavenly Father has for us, His children. So powerful that it is the only thing that could provide a solution for our human dilemma. His love can move mountains, stop the roaring seas, heal broken bones and wounded hearts, transform lives, and set free those held captive by sin and shame (**Is 61:1-3**).

Contrary to worldly opinion, God is not some kind of cosmic bully or some angry taskmaster who shows affection only when you are “good”. He is a loving Father whose love is always able to heal us, transform us, free us, and lead us to the abundant life He has always longed to return His creation to.

This is a great introduction to the third stop on the Romans road. It emphasizes the unconditional love of God towards the sinner whom He is willing to save. While we were unlovable, He loved us. While we were hopeless, He gives us hope. While we couldn’t save ourselves, Christ could. While we were spiritually dead, He made us alive (**Eph 2:1-3**).

Instead of His wrath, God chose to show mercy, love, and kindness to us. That is where the new stop on our journey comes in. **Romans 5:8** brings Jesus, as the Christ, into the forefront and provides an opportunity to integrate Him into the good news. The good news is ultimately the discovery of the extent of God’s love.

God doesn't just merely prove His love in the death of Christ for sinners, but He makes it conspicuous and prominent; He exhibits it; He makes it the highest manifestation of His gospel. His love is what He ultimately puts on display in allowing His Son and our Savior to sacrifice and offer up His life to cover, take away, diminish, and eventually remove the presence of sin.

He is the one who lays down his life without the compulsion of any kind (**Jn 10:15-18**), whose meat and drink was to do his Father's will and to finish His work (**Jn 4:31-34, Mt 26:39**). This is the sole purpose of Jesus' coming into this world to be the physical visible manifestation of God's love.

The work of Jesus on the cross for us is God's ultimate proof of His love for you and I. He may give additional proof, but there is no greater proof. So, If the cross is the ultimate demonstration of God's love, it is also the ultimate demonstration of man's hatred and proves that the height of man's hatred can't defeat the height of God's love.

Paul describes the greatness of God's love. It is love given to the undeserving, to those without strength, to the ungodly, to sinners. This emphasizes the fact that the reasons for God's love are found *in Him*, not in us. He loves us because He is love. Everything that God does, His wrath, correction, and discipline is birthed out of His love (**Heb 12:5-6**).

The love of God is often hard to explain to those who have yet to be born again. This is why sharing the person and purpose of Jesus Christ is essential in our witnessing. Yes God is real, but how can you prove it? Yes, God is good, but why is He good? Yes, God loves them, but how will they know? The answer is a resounding "Because of Jesus Christ!"

It is the inner experience of this love through the Spirit that births us into the kingdom, sustains us as we go through tribulations, and stokes the hope of our anticipated entrance into His eternal presence. It is this love that bore the commandments and that will help us to keep our proper posture in relationship to God (**Mt 22:34-40**).

## JOURNEY DOWN THE ROMANS ROAD PT 4

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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved **-Romans 10:9-10.**

The Romans Road is an evangelistic tool that makes it relatively easy to share the good news about Jesus with others. Ultimately, but not exclusively, the verses provide a step-by-step approach that explains why the good news about Jesus is necessary and how someone can accept it.

As we are discovering the Romans Road to Salvation (Redemption), it is not a cheat sheet for “getting people saved”. It’s a strategic approach to sharing the essential truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How effectively we share the *Good News* can either simplify or complicate the path to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The goal for us is to always make the love of God easier to see by our witness and testimony, understand by our teaching and preaching, and receive our serving and giving. Without these, the recitation of these select passages from the book of Romans can be misinterpreted and therefore misunderstood.

After the first three stops (**Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23; 5:8**) have enlightened us about our human wretchedness we are now left with a decision that we must all make. What do we do with these truths? Do we believe them and receive the gift of salvation (**Jn 3:16**) or do we doubt and disbelieve and continue on in our condemnation (**Jn 3:18**)?

While this decision for Christ may not be made in the moment or on the spot, this fourth spot demands a response, not immediately but ultimately (**Josh 24:14-15; 1 Cor 3:5-8; Phil 2:9-11**). In a world looking for solutions to the brokenness of human sin, the gospel declares that Jesus is the answer. This is really where the rubber meets the road, but the choice is ours.

Paul’s assertion that seems to simplify the process of accepting God’s plan for salvation was necessary to relieve those who needed salvation from the rules, rights, rituals, of the Jewish teachings (**Gal 5:1-6**). The gospel does not place a further burden on the neck, it is to lift the yoke of burden (**Mt 11:28-30; Acts 15:6-11**).

Likewise, in this day and age, if we are not careful, we can also place unnecessary demands on persons who are looking to receive God’s love, in and through salvation. It, in fact, offends God when we try to force people to return to the strictures of the law in order have relationship with Him because it nullifies the free gift of grace (**Gal 2:21**).

We do not gain God’s attributed righteousness by works. Instead, we gain it by confessing and believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Confession has more than just the idea of making a public profession, as is our duty, but also of “*agreeing with*” or conceding to a truth as it is presented.

When we confess “the Lord Jesus”, we agree with what God said about Jesus (**2 Ptr 1:16-17**), and with what Jesus said about Himself (**Jn 14:6**). It means we recognize that Jesus is God, that He is the Messiah, that His work on the cross is the only way of salvation for mankind, and that we now surrender to Him as Lord (**1 Tim 6:12-13**).

This was no small feat in that day; to use the word *Kurios*, in reference to Jesus publicly was to rank Him with either the Emperor or with God, which we both respectively blasphemous. Neither the Gentiles nor the Jews would, unless otherwise led by the Spirit and by faith, give another supremacy in their lives let alone pledge to Him implicit obedience and reverent worship.

Those who come to Christ by faith are acknowledging that they have placed themselves entirely and without reserve under His authority to carry out without hesitation whatever He may choose for them to do. When it comes to faith in Christ there is no such thing as salvation apart from lordship; not authentic salvation (**Lk 6:46-49**).

The question is often asked, how do I know if I'm saved? The simple answer is that if you have truly believed in Jesus Christ and put your faith in Him, God will transform you. The old ways of sin that were once revealed in are going to fade, and the new life you live in Christ will dominate your passions (**2 Cor5:17**).

Simple belief is not a proof of salvation (**Lk6:43-45**). It is one thing to believe in Christ but another thing to follow Christ as a disciple (**James 2:19**). This is why confession is a matter of the heart. And as a matter of the heart our life, lifestyle, and living will be our perpetual confessions.

**“True faith is never silent; it always confesses” -R.C.H. Lenski**

Believing in Jesus means a great deal more than believing about Jesus. Knowing the facts about His life and death is mere “head knowledge.” Believing in Jesus demands that we put that knowledge to work. It means to trust, to have total confidence, to “rest your case” on Him.

The gospel may be in someone's mouth in the sense that he can repeat it, and it may be in his heart in the sense that he knows about it and understands it. But such a person is not actually saved unless he believes the gospel message to be true and both internally and externally surrenders himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

To “believe in the heart” means not only to accept the bare facts about something but also to accept its full meaning and significance and to be committed to applying its implications to one's own life. It is comparable to being “obedient from the heart



## JOURNEY DOWN THE ROMANS ROAD PT 5

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” - **Romans 10:13**

As we have discovered in looking at the first several steps or stops on the Romans Road, God’s plan and path toward redemption and salvation is wide open (**Acts 26:22-23; Rom 1:16**). By virtue of the fact that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” and that “none is righteous, no, not one”, we all need a savior.

This *openness* was difficult for the Jews to grasp literally and figuratively, not because it was so hard to understand, but because of their elitism they felt that they had some say so. Their national pride, as the chosen of God, led them to feel that they had the right to exclude those whom they felt God excluded.

As hard as it may have been to get them to realize that all of humanity, by nature, and by its own inability to keep up with the law, was unrighteous and wicked, this is a tougher pill to swallow. The simplicity of the confession eliminated the ability to stand on their personal piety (**Rom 10:9-10**).

As much as God’s redemptive plan was worked out in history through one particular race, it was meant from the beginning for the benefit of all people everywhere. The Apostle Paul is now making the argument that there is no distinction between the Jews as God’s chosen, and the rest of the *Gentile* world (**Gal 3:26-29**).

The idea of “no distinction” antagonized the Israelites because it not only opened the door to those they kept out, it also made freely available the same salvation they worked so hard for, but failed so miserably at. This, therefore, leveled the playing field and made them lowly and in need of a Savior like everyone else.

Paul made it clear that Israel, who had been accustomed to a distinction in their own favor as the chosen race of God, lost their favored position in their rejection of Christ (**Jn 1:10-12**). He’s now making it plain that while they are not excluded from the plan, they were acceptable in it by the same terms that applied to all others.

The thrust of "Whosoever shall call, etc." is that "You Jews also may become Christians and receive God's blessing and free gift of Salvation." Can you imagine the disbelief and discord that it created for them to hear that God was going to bless foreigners, and those deemed unequal, and the unworthy?

This fifth stop on the Romans Road to redemption means that the gospel of faith is open to all. The apostle Paul cites Joel to back his claim that the message of salvation in Jesus Christ is for all people (**Joel 2:28-32**). Whoever trusts in Jesus Christ by believing in Him shall be saved and included in the family of God (**Acts 16:31**).

Those who call on the name of the Lord put their “hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, different though they may be, and especially of those who believe” (**1 Tim 4:10**). But there must be a proper response, which is to call on the name of the Lord. This is the challenge and the reason for the widespread easy-believism and false assurance that plagues the church today.

The over-simplification of Romans 10:13 leads many people to abuse the idea salvation. One, in assuming that that's all we have to do, as a "hail mary" of sorts. But two, as if it's our calling on His name that somehow earns us salvation when scripture plainly teaches that we don't have to do any work to be saved (**Eph 2:8-9**).

The grace of God is the source of our salvation, and we receive that grace through faith. We call on God as an expression of faith (**Romans 5:1-2**). This is how we understand that "to call on the name of the Lord" means that by faith we understand Jesus's work, follow in fellowship with His spirit, and live under the lordship of Christ forever (**Mt 7:21-23; Ps 116:1-6**).

There's nothing complicated about the plan of salvation (**Jn 3:16-17**). What makes it not so easy is, by faith, completely giving ourselves over to Him and living a surrendered life. In the Old Testament, the phrase "call upon the name of the Lord" was especially associated with right worship and obedience to the true God. It carried the connotations of worship, adoration, and praise and extolled God's majesty, power, and holiness (**Ps 30:1-4**).

We have to understand "calls on" not in a mere formal sense but as a calling on the Lord out of a sense of inadequacy and need that comes from a genuine conviction that He can be relied on. Calling here is a synonym (synecdoche) for believing all that God promised to us and trusting His character to deliver on His promises (**Ex 34:6-7**).

To call on the name of the Lord is to believe all that the name of the Lord stands for; to know the Lord in His all of His knowable qualities (**Acts 17:22-28**). While He can not be known in totality, what we do know and what we can know ought to lead us into a life of calling upon His name; not just for eternal salvation, but also for our daily needs.

We, by faith in *His name* can rest both our present situation and our eternal future on the fact that He will honor His own name (**Prov 18:10; Acts 3:16**). In honoring His own name, He remains true to His person (**Mal 3:6**), He keeps His word (**Psalms 138:2**), and answers those who, by faith, call on Him (**Mk 10:46-52**).