

## **The Necessity of Faith** (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year C)

### **Romans 10:8-13—You Will Be Saved**

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, *the word of faith* which we preach); <sup>9</sup> because, *if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

<sup>10</sup> For man *believes* with his heart and so is *justified*, and he *confesses* with his lips and so is *saved*. <sup>11</sup> The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.”

<sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. <sup>13</sup> *For, “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”* (Romans 10:8-13; cf. Joel 2:32)

1. **Faith:** Paul’s gospel = “the word of faith” (Greek *pistis*) (10:8)
  - a. *pistis* = “belief”
  - b. *pistis* = “trust” or “confidence”
  - c. *pistis* = “fidelity” or “faithfulness”
2. **Necessity:** faith in Christ is for all people (universal)
  - a. “No distinction between Jew and Greek” (10:12)
  - b. “Same Lord (Greek *kyrios*) is Lord (Greek *kyrios*) of all” (10:12)
  - c. “Lord” = Jesus; “Jesus is Lord” (Greek *kyrios*) (10:9)
3. **Salvation:** “you will be saved” (Greek *sōzō*) (10:9)
  - a. **Heart:** “believe” in your “heart” (internal)
  - b. **Lips:** “confess” with your “lips” (external)
4. **Jewish Scripture:** calling on “the name of the Lord” (Hebrew *Yhwh*) (Joel 2:32)

### **The Living Tradition**

**Catechism:** *Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him.* “Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and ‘makes it easy for all to accept and *believe the truth.*’” (CCC 153)

**Catechism:** Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. *But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed are contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason... In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: “Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace”* (CCC 154-55, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 2, art. 9)

**Catechism:** *Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is*

*necessary for obtaining that salvation.* “Since ‘without faith it is impossible to please [God]’ and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life ‘but he who endures to the end.’” (CCC 161)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year C)

1. According to Paul, is “faith” in Christ necessary for some, or for all? Why?

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### For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans* (trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P.; eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón; Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012).
2. Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VI; Downers Grove, IL.: IVP, 1998).
3. Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Paideia; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).