

Jesus Is Lord! Believe It! Confess It!

February 14, 2016

Romans 10:5-13 -- "Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: 'The man who does these things will live by them.' But the righteousness that is by faith says: Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down)? Or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The Word of the Lord is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the Word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, For everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.'"

Are you planning on celebrating Lupercalia Day? Probably Not! It was a Roman festival held on February 15th. According to some it was a Pagan celebration to honor the Roman goddess named JUNO, the goddess of women and marriage in the Roman Society. In the hopes of drawing people away from the pagan celebration of Lupercalia, There were Christian leaders who pushed to change the festival from The Lupercalia Festival to Valentine's Day on February 14th. This change occurred in 496 A.D. and was pushed through by Pope Gelasius I.

The name Valentine's Day being taken from one of two Christian men named Valentine, the exact history of the men is debated by Historians. But one man was a Priest by the name Valentine of Rome. Valentine of Rome lived around 200 A.D. and He was beheaded about 270 A.D. because he helped Christians who were being persecuted. The place that he believed to have been beheaded according to Historians was on Palatine Hill in Rome at the site of the ancient altar of Juno the false goddess of women and marriage. The other man named Valentine was a BISHOP of a town named Terni, which was about 60 miles away from Rome. He was beheaded about 273 A.D. because he preached the Word of Christ and a Roman family converted to Christianity.

Valentine's Day as we know focuses on Love.

As nice as it is to speak of love, all the Valentine Cards, The Boxes of Candy and Hugs and Kisses cannot save us from death and hell. The Only Thing or rather the Only One Who can and has saved us from death and hell is the Lord Jesus Christ! The Only Love that saves us from death and hell, is the Love of God poured out upon mankind in Christ Jesus. And Paul makes it very clear that

Vs. 8 – The Word of the Lord is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the Word of faith we are proclaiming:

Vs. 9 – That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Vs. 10 – For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Of course it is important to be very careful that you do not fall into the trap that so many religious organizations in our day and age fall into, in which they make Faith into a work of mankind, or some type of cooperation with God in Salvation. This is not possible of course since we know from passages such as Ephesians 2:1-10 that because of our sinful nature we are spiritually dead in our Trespasses and sins.

We are however thankful to God, now and forever in eternity that when we are / were brought to faith in Jesus, we are Justified, - that is God's Righteous Declaration, becomes our own. Faith is the Receiving organ of that Work which Christ has completed on the cross of Calvary. Christ's full payment for sin becomes our own.

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Christ's Righteousness becomes our own, and thus Salvation becomes our own.

As Paul writes to the congregation in Rome about 57 A.D. He is warning them to guard against the thought that we are saved by the Law. It is true that Paul writes:

Vs. 5 – Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: 'The man who does these things will live by them.'

The Law of Moses, As Glorious as it is, (and it is 100% from God,) we cannot keep it perfectly and so we are doomed to hell. God's Law must be kept perfectly, - The Entire Civil – Ceremonial and Moral Law of God. When we begin to think that we can by our own efforts save ourselves from death and hell we fall into a trap of the sinful human nature. As God tells us through the Apostle Paul:

Vs. 6 – But the righteousness that is by faith says: Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down)?'

Vs. 7 - Or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

To attempt to Justify oneself by works is foolish and inappropriate. It is attempting to do all over again what Christ has already DONE! It is making a mockery of Christ's perfect Life and Sacrifice FOR US! In this section to the congregation in Rome, God through the Apostle Paul also assures us that because we are Justified by Our Lord Jesus Christ we will never be put to shame as God tells us through the Apostle Paul:

Vs. 11 – As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.'

God also tells us through the Apostle Paul that this Justification of Christ is for **ALL** mankind.

Vs. 12 – For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him,

It is then after God creates faith in our heart that we are led to respond.

Vs. 13 – For everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.

The Faith which God has created in our hearts through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, yes, even in an infant at Baptism leads us to respond with a Confession of Faith.

We confess our faith with The Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed.

We confess our faith every time we acknowledge that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

We confess our faith by being here in Public Worship.

Every time we confess our faith in our words and actions we are proclaiming Jesus is Lord of our Life.

And even as we confess Christ here and now, we look forward to confessing and singing praises to Him forever in heaven because by His blood, we are Justified, we are saved, from hell, and for a life of service now and in eternity.