

# The Strong Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – Rom 10:9-10

**Introduction** – There are various ways to summarize the Gospel message and these verses are a classic go-to, focusing on the lordship and the resurrection of Christ. These two claims are found in the beginning of this epistle, “*declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead*” (Rom 1:4). Christians, of all people, need to hear the gospel for its saving power. The strength of the gospel is something we too easily doubt. Let us begin by considering what it means that Jesus is Lord and why that is such strong and good news.

**Overview** – There are two parts involved in this confession that is “*unto salvation*,” the mouth and the heart (v9, or the heart and the mouth, v10). Verse 9 follows the order from Paul’s earlier quoting of Deuteronomy (v8), while verse 10 emphasizes the order of believing which produces and leads to confessing. Salvation is the result of believing in the resurrection of the Son of God and confessing that He is the Lord Jesus.

**Jesus is Lord** – There is great strength in that phrase and it can escape us. In our Old Testament books we often encounter the word “LORD” in all caps. This signals the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, which is in the original Hebrew. This is the covenant name of God, rendered “Yahweh” or “Jehovah” by adding certain vowels. In Rom 10:13 we have a quotation from the prophet Joel, “*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*.” But as Paul writes in the Greek, he renders the Hebrew YHWH as *kurios*, which in English is “lord” and has as large of a range of meaning as the Greek word. Taking all of this together (Rom 1:4, 10:9-10, 13), it is clear that we are not confessing that Jesus is an aristocrat, worthy of dignity for being a great teacher, leader, or example. No, we are confessing that Jesus is Jehovah, Jesus is Yahweh; Jesus is God.

**Heart Belief** – It might seem strange at first that we are called on to believe with our heart and not with our mind. But faith is not principally a matter of the intellect as though you could take a science or sociology class on Jesus and by passing a test be saved. That is not “*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb 11:1). It is only grasped by those who are “*taught by the LORD*” (Isaiah 54:13), to know the Father and His Son, which is eternal life (John 17:3). Faith is not an intellectual achievement; it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9). Holding to certain doctrines as having respect to some particular person, but not as having any reference to oneself is not heart belief. That is like one who studies how bread is digested and assimilated into one’s bones but never eats. Learn faith from little children, even infants, who know when they are hungry to go to their mother’s breast.

**Life Confession** – While it is the heart, and not simply the mind, that is to believe, it is possible to misunderstand the confession of “*the mouth*” to indicate a one-time sputtering of some words as if they were magic. The confession of the mouth embraces the whole of the Christian life. Confession occurs in uniting and participating in the public worship of God (Psalm 22:22). Water baptism and participation at the Lord’s Table are both confessions that Jesus is Lord and especially that He is the exalted Lord by His incarnation, crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection (Phil 2:5-11). Confession occurs in our association with God’s people (Ruth 1:16). It often includes taking up the cross even against one’s closest relations (Matt 10:35-39). Confession is an acceptable sacrifice during times of temptation, as when the harlot is seducing (Gen 39:9), or when some dirty business deal that has become “acceptable” in your line of work is offered to you, or when your friends call you to skip the Lord’s Day worship for some fun in the sun, or when you are given the opportunity join the cool kids and watch some sleazy movie. And when trials come, these are times to confess that Jesus is Lord and that His salvation is strong and good (2 Cor 12:9).

**Authority that Bleeds** – Why would a man bow the knee to the Lord Jesus regardless of life’s circumstances? Jesus demands absolute submission for He has absolute authority (Matt 16:34). But how does Christ wield that authority? He shows the apostles as He washes their feet (John 13:13-14). This is biblical authority, the kind we are to imitate in human positions of authority. This authority washes feet. This authority bleeds. Every person that Jesus expects obedience from is a person that Jesus laid down His life for. He is the good and rightful king who has come into His land, put down the enemy, established His sovereign and absolute monarchy, and because of how He establishes that lordship, his people love it. Christians, sons and daughters of the King, delight in the authority of our Lord.

**Because He is Lord** – Our confession does not make Jesus Lord; our confession declares that He is Lord, apart from any decision anyone else makes. Because He is Lord over everything, we are summoned to participate by faith individually and declare Him to be our Lord. As Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead, God was reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor 5:19) and therefore we summon the world to “come quietly” (2 Cor 5:20). In His ascension, Christ responded to the offer His Father had made, an offer of the nations (Psalm 2:8). You have come to Jesus because you had to come; He already won you, purchased you and saved you in principle. We go to the nations to disciple them of a victory completed and not to try and win a victory (Matt 28:18-20). We believe the gospel, not to make it true, but because it is true.