

Saved: God's Plan of Salvation, Teacher's Guide

Week 2: Hearing the Gospel: Faith Comes by Hearing

Romans 10:13–17

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson establishes how saving faith actually comes to be, and the doctrine at stake is the necessity and sufficiency of the gospel word. Paul reasons backward from salvation to its source: people are saved by calling on the Lord, they call because they believe, they believe because they hear, they hear because someone preaches, and someone preaches because they are sent. The conclusion lands in verse 17: “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Help your students see that faith is neither a leap in the dark nor a vague religious feeling, but a reasoned trust produced by the message of Christ. This anchors the high view of Scripture that runs through our heritage: the word of God is the seed that produces faith, and where it is not sown, faith does not grow.

Note two doctrinal points that this passage quietly establishes and that the rest of the study will develop. First, in verse 16 Paul speaks of those who have not “obeyed the gospel,” treating the good news as something to be obeyed and not merely acknowledged. Second, verse 13 promises salvation to all who “call on the name of the Lord,” a phrase the New Testament fills out with believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized (Acts 2:21 with 2:38; Acts 22:16). Plant these seeds gently here; they will flower in the coming weeks.

But this lesson is not only about a process. It is about gratitude and responsibility. Every Christian in the room is a Christian because someone carried the word to them. Aim to stir both a deeper hunger for the word that feeds their own faith and a renewed willingness to be a messenger to others. Send students home more grateful for the gospel they have heard and more burdened for those who have not.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul concludes, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (v. 17). According to this verse, where does saving faith come from, and what does this teach us about the role of Scripture and the gospel message in bringing a person to salvation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Center the lesson on verse 17. The Greek makes the source plain: faith has its origin in hearing, and what is heard is “the word of Christ.” Help students grasp that faith is not self-generated. It does not bubble up from within, nor is it manufactured by willpower or emotional experience. It

is a response to a message that comes from outside us, the announcement of who Jesus is and what He has done.

Stress the high view of Scripture this implies. The word of Christ is the seed (Luke 8:11), and faith is the harvest. This is why the public reading and faithful preaching of the Scriptures has always stood at the center of the Lord's church. A church that drifts from the word will, in time, drift from faith, because it has cut faith off from its only source.

Distinguish biblical faith from its counterfeits. Our culture prizes a contentless "faith," a positive attitude or sincere hope aimed at nothing in particular. Paul's faith has content: it is faith in Christ, produced by the word about Christ. Sincerity is not the source of saving faith; the gospel is.

Guard against the Calvinistic notion that faith is a gift irresistibly worked in the elect apart from the means of the word. Paul's whole argument assumes the opposite: God works through the proclaimed word, and people genuinely hear and respond. The call is real and the response is real.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Saving faith as a response to the gospel message, not a self-generated feeling
- The word of Christ as the seed that produces faith (Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23)
- The high authority of Scripture as central to the life of the church
- Biblical faith has content (faith in Christ) versus contentless modern "faith"
- God works through the means of the word; the call and the response are genuine

Discussion Prompts

- Where do people today look for faith apart from the word, and why does it fail them?
- How does knowing faith comes by hearing shape how we value preaching and Bible reading?
- What is the difference between sincere belief in general and faith in Christ specifically?

Question 2

Student Question:

Faith feeds on the word of Christ, and it grows thin where that word is scarce. Be honest about what you are actually feeding your soul each day. What voices and inputs are shaping your heart most, and is the word of Christ among them or crowded out by them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This first self-examining question moves from where faith comes from to how the student is feeding it. A faith born by the word is also sustained by the word. Help students take an honest inventory of their daily inputs.

Name the competition plainly and without scolding. Most of us absorb hours of news, entertainment, and social media for every few minutes in Scripture, then wonder why our faith feels malnourished and anxious. We are not starving for lack of food; we are simply eating the wrong things.

Offer a concrete, doable next step rather than guilt. Even a small, steady intake of the word, read slowly and prayerfully, reshapes the heart over time. The goal is not information but communion with Christ through His word.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faith sustained, not only born, by the word of Christ
- An honest audit of the voices shaping the heart
- The malnourished faith that results from word-scarcity
- Scripture intake as communion with Christ, not mere study

Discussion Prompts

- What are the loudest voices in your life right now, and what are they forming in you?
- What is one small, sustainable change in your intake of the word this week?
- How have you seen the word reshape your thinking over time?

Question 3

Student Question:

Trace the chain Paul lays out in verses 14 and 15: calling, believing, hearing, preaching, sending. Why does each link depend on the one before it, and what does this reveal about how God has chosen to bring the gospel to the world?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Walk the chain backward with the class, as Paul does: saved by calling, calling on the believed, believing the heard, hearing the preached, preaching the sent. Each link is necessary; remove any one and the chain breaks. This is God's ordained method for reaching the world.

Highlight the word "sent." Behind every messenger stands a sending, whether by the Lord, by His church, or simply by a believer moved to speak. Evangelism is not an optional hobby for the unusually bold; it is the next link God has appointed after the gospel has reached us.

Connect this to the authority of the message. Messengers do not invent the news; they deliver it. The content is fixed, “the word of Christ,” and faithfulness means carrying that word accurately rather than a message of our own making.

Address the dignity Paul gives to the messenger. He calls their feet “beautiful,” quoting Isaiah. In God’s eyes there is nothing more lovely than the ordinary person who carries good news to someone who needs it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s ordained chain: sending, preaching, hearing, believing, calling, salvation
- Evangelism as the appointed next link after we have received the gospel
- The fixed content of the message versus the messenger’s own ideas
- The dignity God assigns to gospel messengers (Isaiah 52:7)
- The local church as a sending body

Discussion Prompts

- Which link in the chain do we most often neglect, and why?
- What does it mean that the message is fixed and not ours to alter?
- Who first “sent” the message to you, and how did it reach you?

Question 4

Student Question:

Paul calls the feet of gospel messengers “beautiful” (v. 15). Whether or not you feel qualified, God has placed people in your life who may never hear unless you speak. Who are they, and what is one specific step you could take this week to carry the message to even one of them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question turns the dignity of the messenger toward the student. Press past the abstract. Ask each person to picture an actual name and face, someone within their ordinary reach who may never hear unless they speak.

Address the fear honestly. Most believers stay silent not from indifference but from fear of rejection, of awkwardness, of not having all the answers. Remind them that they are messengers, not authors; they need only point to Jesus and to His word, not win every argument.

Aim for one concrete step. A shared meal, an invitation to study, a single honest sentence about what Christ has done. Faithfulness this week is measured in small, specific acts of courage, not grand campaigns.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Evangelism as a personal calling, not only a church program
- Naming actual people within our reach
- Overcoming the fear of speaking by remembering we are messengers, not authors
- Small, concrete steps as genuine faithfulness

Discussion Prompts

- Who is one person you can picture right now who may never hear unless you speak?
- What fear most often keeps you quiet, and how does the gospel speak to it?
- What is one small step you could take this week toward that person?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul quotes the promise, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 13). What does it mean to “call on the name of the Lord,” and how does the rest of the New Testament fill out that phrase so that it means more than simply saying words?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open the meaning of “call on the name of the Lord” (v. 13, quoting Joel 2:32). In our culture “calling on God” can sound like a quick prayer in a crisis. Scripture means something far richer: a wholehearted turning to the Lord in trusting submission.

Let Scripture interpret Scripture. The same phrase appears in Acts 22:16, where Ananias tells Saul, “Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” There, calling on the Lord’s name is bound up with baptism. Calling is not merely speaking words; it is the whole response of faith expressed in obedience.

Use this to correct the “sinner’s prayer” misreading directly but gently. Many take Romans 10:13 to mean salvation comes by reciting a prayer. But Paul is not describing a magic formula; he is summarizing the believing, obedient response that the chapter and the wider New Testament spell out. Calling on the Lord is what a surrendered heart does, not a single sentence that secures heaven.

Keep the promise warm and wide: “everyone.” No one is excluded by race, past, or status. The door is genuinely open to all who will call.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Calling on the name of the Lord as wholehearted, trusting submission, not a formula
- Acts 22:16 linking “calling on his name” with baptism
- Why the “sinner’s prayer” reading misunderstands the phrase
- The universal scope of the promise: “everyone”

- Scripture interpreting Scripture as a method

Discussion Prompts

- What does our culture usually mean by “calling on God,” and how is that different from Paul?
- How does Acts 22:16 help us understand what calling on the Lord involves?
- Why is it good news that the promise is for “everyone” without exception?

Question 6

Student Question:

There may be a gap between the truth you have heard and the response you have actually made. Have you yourself called on the name of the Lord in the way Scripture describes, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized into Christ? If not, what is keeping you from answering the call you have already heard?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question gives the not-yet-obedient hearer a gentle, direct invitation. Many in our classes have heard the gospel for years without ever responding to it as Scripture describes. Create space for honesty without pressure.

Walk carefully here. The point is not to manufacture doubt in faithful Christians but to let anyone who has never truly responded recognize the gap between hearing and obeying. The previous question defined calling on the Lord; this one asks whether the student has done it.

Be ready to talk further after class. Have a plan for the person whose honest answer is “no, I never have.” The study will walk the full response (faith, repentance, confession, baptism) in the coming weeks, and you can offer to study one-on-one with anyone who is ready.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gap between hearing the gospel and obeying it
- Honest self-examination without false guilt for the faithful
- Readiness to help the one who has never responded
- The full response of faith previewed: believe, repent, confess, be baptized

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between knowing the gospel and obeying it?
- If you have never called on the Lord as Scripture describes, what is holding you back?
- How can this class come alongside someone ready to take that step?

Question 7

Student Question:

In verse 16 Paul says, “they have not all obeyed the gospel.” Why does Paul speak of the gospel as something to be obeyed and not only believed, and what does this tell us about the kind of response the good news is meant to produce?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is a pivotal doctrinal question. Verse 16 says some have not “obeyed the gospel,” treating the good news as something one obeys. Help students feel how striking this is: the gospel is not only believed; it is obeyed. There is such a thing as obedience to good news.

Explain why news can be obeyed. The gospel is an announcement (Christ died, was buried, and rose), but it comes with a summons (repent, be baptized, follow Him as Lord). To obey the gospel is to respond to that summons with the obedience that faith produces, what Paul elsewhere calls “the obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

Press the doctrinal payoff. This verse undercuts the faith-only error before we reach Ephesians 2. If the gospel can be disobeyed, then believing it involves more than mental agreement; it involves a response of the will. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 warns of judgment on those who “do not obey the gospel,” language that would make no sense if the gospel called for nothing but assent.

Hold the balance. Obeying the gospel is not earning salvation; it is submitting to the way of grace God has appointed. The contrast is not between faith and obedience but between an obedient faith and a dead, disobedient non-faith.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gospel as something to be obeyed, not merely acknowledged (Romans 10:16)
- The obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26) as the proper response to the good news
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and judgment on those who do not obey the gospel
- How an obeyable gospel undercuts faith-only-ism
- Obedience as submission to grace, not the earning of salvation

Discussion Prompts

- How can good news be something a person obeys or disobeys?
- What does it tell us that Scripture can speak of people failing to obey the gospel?
- How is obeying the gospel different from trying to earn salvation?

Question 8**Student Question:**

It is possible to hear the truth clearly and still leave it lying on the table unobeyed. Where in your life right now have you heard God's word plainly but not yet acted on it? What would obedience look like this week in that specific area?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question presses verse 16 inward. It is possible to hear truth with perfect clarity and leave it unobeyed, like the unopened letter on the table. Invite students to identify a specific area, not just a general resolve to do better.

Help them see the danger of mere hearing. James warns against being hearers who deceive themselves and are not doers (James 1:22). Repeated hearing without obeying can actually harden the heart, dulling our sense of urgency until the familiar word no longer moves us.

Aim at one act of obedience this week. A reconciliation we have avoided, a habit we have justified, a step of faith we keep postponing. The goal is to close one gap between hearing and doing, so the lesson produces formation and not just agreement.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The peril of hearing without obeying (James 1:22–25)
- How repeated hearing without response can harden the heart
- Identifying one specific, postponed act of obedience
- Obedience as the proof of genuine hearing

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you heard God's word clearly but not yet acted on it?
- How can familiarity with the truth actually dull us to it?
- What is one act of obedience you can take this week to close the gap?

Question 9

Student Question:

Paul roots the whole chain in "the word of Christ" (v. 17), and elsewhere insists there is salvation in no other name. If faith comes only through hearing this particular message about this particular Lord, what does that mean for the millions who have never heard, and what responsibility does it place on those of us who have? How does this guard us against the popular idea that sincerity in any belief is enough?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block. Paul roots the entire chain in "the word of Christ," the specific message about the specific Lord. Combined with his insistence that faith comes only by hearing this word, the passage raises the exclusivity of the gospel and the urgency of missions.

State the hard truth plainly and pastorally. If faith comes by hearing the word of Christ, then those who never hear are genuinely without that faith. Scripture is clear that salvation is found in Christ alone (Acts 4:12; John 14:6). This is sobering, and it is precisely why the chain ends in sending and preaching. The answer to the lostness of those who have not heard is not to deny the danger but to carry the message.

Confront the popular alternative directly. Our age teaches that sincerity in any belief is enough, that all roads lead to God. Paul's argument dismantles this. If any sincere belief sufficed, there would be no need to preach, to send, or to suffer for the gospel. The very existence of the Great Commission assumes that people are lost without the word of Christ.

Guard against two errors as you teach. Do not soften into universalism (all will be saved regardless of response), and do not harden into speculation about the eternal fate of every individual who has never heard, which Scripture leaves in the hands of a just and merciful God (Genesis 18:25). What Scripture makes our business is clear: we have heard, and we are sent.

Land it on responsibility. The weight of this doctrine falls not as despair but as commission. We who have the word hold something the world cannot live without, and we are the link God has appointed to carry it. Privilege and responsibility arrive together.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The exclusivity of the gospel: salvation in Christ alone (Acts 4:12; John 14:6)
- The necessity of hearing the word of Christ for faith to arise
- Why "sincerity in any belief is enough" contradicts Paul's argument and the Great Commission
- Rejecting universalism without presuming to settle every individual case (Genesis 18:25)
- The lostness of the unreached as the engine of missions, not a reason for despair
- Privilege and responsibility joined: we have heard, so we are sent

Discussion Prompts

- If faith comes only by hearing the word of Christ, what follows for those who have never heard?
- How does Paul's argument expose the popular idea that all sincere beliefs lead to God?
- How should the lostness of the unreached shape our priorities and prayers?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across this passage. It moves from a God who sends, to a messenger who speaks, to a hearer who believes and calls on the Lord and is saved. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth. Is He calling you to feed your own faith more deeply on His word, to obey

something you have heard, or to become a sender or a messenger to someone who has not yet heard?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the lesson into one personal response. The passage moved from a sending God to a speaking messenger to a believing, calling hearer. Ask each student to locate themselves somewhere on that path and to name one concrete step.

Offer three honest possibilities the question itself raises: feed your own faith more deeply on the word, obey something you have already heard, or become a sender or messenger to someone who has not heard. Encourage specificity over good intentions.

Be ready again for the seeker. For some the truest next step is to call on the Lord for the first time. Hold that open warmly. For all, tie the response back to Christ, who is Himself the One the whole chain is about, so the step is toward a Person and not merely a program.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Locating oneself on the path from sending to believing
- Three concrete directions: feed faith, obey the word, carry the message
- Space for the seeker to call on the Lord for the first time
- Every step oriented toward Christ Himself

Discussion Prompts

- Where on this path do you find yourself right now?
- What single, specific step is the Lord asking of you this week?
- Who could you tell about that step so they can encourage and pray for you?