

Ev221 Sharing Your Spiritual Journey

Lesson Ev221-20 Methods: Roman Road to Salvation

Some years ago, a French tightrope walker attempted one of his feats in North America. He strung a rope across Niagara Falls, between the US and Canada. The cheering crowd was amazed to see him walk on the tightrope clear across the waterfall. When he asked, they all agreed they believed he could carry a person on his back while crossing the Falls again. Not one person, however, would volunteer to be that person. They believed in their heads, but not in their hearts. They were not willing to risk their lives for their belief.

You may ask, “Is there a simple, yet direct, way to use God’s Word? How can I get another person to really believe in Jesus—enough to trust him with their life?” The Bible compares the Word of God to a sharp sword that can penetrate a person’s soul and spirit (Heb 4:12). This lesson is the third in a series of methods for sharing your spiritual journey. It teaches a specific way of witnessing, by using Paul’s words from the Book of Romans to penetrate an unbeliever’s heart.

As a witness—an evangelist—you should memorize the following scriptures and their meanings in sequence. Then, sharing the verses one by one, you can provide a clear explanation of the ‘road’ a person should follow to become a Christian.

The first verse to use is **Romans 3:23**: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” This is the problem every person faces. No one is excused; all are sinners. No one can achieve the glory of God by their own deeds. Most people probably know they are not on the same level as God. Some might say, “Well, I am basically a good person,” or “I’ve done the best I could.” They try to explain away the truth of their separation from God.

You might answer such statements with a few questions, “How many lies does it take for someone to be a liar? How many robberies to be a robber? It’s the same with sin; it only takes one sin to be a sinner.” The Bible says, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (James 2:10). People know, deep in their hearts, that what the Scripture says of them is true. They have sinned. But there is an even more difficult truth concerning this reality. The result of that sin is separation from God.

The second verse to use is **Romans 6:23a**: “The wages of sin is death.” This is the result of sin and disobedience in each life—separation from God. Death is inevitable for all humans. So, the question is what happens after that? Our choices in this life impact our destiny in the next. We will live for eternity, either with God or separated from him. The Bible is very clear: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement” (Heb 9:27, KJV).

The Scriptures describe the process of sowing and reaping in our lives. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal 6:7–8). Each person has a choice. Sow a life of sin which results in death, or believe in Jesus, which brings eternal life. God loves us and wants the best for all of us. He made a way for us to be made right before him, in spite of our sinfulness.

The third verse is **Romans 5:8**: “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” This is the only solution God provides. We have already said that God loves us, but love is more than a feeling. Love became an action—a sacrificial action—on our behalf. This is seen in the act of God offering up his Son on our behalf on the Cross. Jesus said it best, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). In spite of all our sins, knowing everything we have ever done wrong, he laid down his life. Seeing every evil and impure thought and knowing all about our sins, Jesus still died on the Cross for us.

The fourth verse is **Romans 6:23b**: “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” God’s solution is the gift of his Son. Elsewhere in the Bible, the apostle John writes, “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God is a giving God, who gives to us even when we don’t deserve anything. James tells us: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father” (James 1:17).

The gift God provides is the best gift of all—eternal life with him. It’s not just a quantity of life after we die, but a quality of life that we share with Jesus here and now. Because he died for us, we can live for him. It’s only through Jesus that we can have an ongoing relationship with God in eternity. While these verses tell us what God has done, the gift of salvation does require some response from us. It requires that we receive the gift that God has offered us. How is this done?

The fifth and last verse is **Romans 10:9-10**: “If you declare 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 profess your faith and are saved.” Our part in being saved is to confess and believe.

The phrase ‘Jesus is Lord’ should be understood as a major contrast for the Roman audience Paul is writing to. A common phrase of their day was, “Caesar (Emperor of Rome) is Lord.” To make a public statement about Jesus being Lord was to defy Roman law. It could mean a death sentence. In fact, many Christians were martyred in Rome, because of their confession of Jesus as Lord. Many scholars think that this was likely a confession that was made at the time of a person’s water baptism. If that is true, it was not something done alone and in secret, but publicly. Thus it was a dangerous confession of faith in that context.

Other key words here are “believe in your heart.” This is not just head knowledge, knowing about Jesus. Instead it refers to trusting in your heart that Jesus has risen from the dead. With the heart, a person believes and is justified. That means God sees those who believe as if they have never sinned.

In many belief systems or religions, a person can attain eternal life by *doing* something. Acting holy enough, doing enough good works, making enough sacrifices to deities—these can satisfy the demands of the gods. The favor of the one true God comes only by grace. Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers, “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph 2:8-9). There is no way to earn salvation. It is by God’s grace we are saved. Even the faith to believe is a gift to us from God. Understanding the complete simplicity of his grace is the first step toward receiving his forgiveness.

After sharing the five scriptures of the *Roman Road to Salvation*, try to bring the person to a point of decision. You may want to use an additional scripture that gives Jesus' words. He says, "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Rev 3:20). Christ's invitation includes "anyone" who hears.

You might conclude your time with the person by saying something like this: "I don't believe in coincidence, fate, or luck, since I became a Christian. The Bible tells us the steps of a righteous person are ordered by God. It is not by chance that you are here and that you listened to my sharing these words about the Roman Road to salvation. I believe God is trying to say something to you. I believe he is saying that you need to accept his invitation of forgiveness and commit your life to Jesus. Would you like to do that right now?"

This lesson is **important** because it provides a scriptural way of sharing the gospel message.

The **central truths** of this lesson are that we are all separated from God because of our sins and we deserve the punishment of death. But the Father demonstrated his love for us by providing eternal life through his son Jesus. Because of his grace, we receive this salvation by faith. We confess that Jesus is Lord, and accept his offer to share eternal life with him forever.

Review Questions

1. According to this lesson, the *Roman Road to Salvation*, what is the basic approach the evangelist should use in sharing the gospel? [Pause 5 seconds.]

A. If you said, "The evangelist should first memorize the verses in order, then provide a clear explanation of each verse," you are correct.

2. According to the lesson, what are the five verses the evangelist should memorize, and in what order? [Pause]

A. If you answered the following, in order, you are correct:

Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23a: "The wages of sin is death."

Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:23b: "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 10:9-10: "If you declare 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 profess your faith and are saved."

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the five passages of the Roman Road, along with the explanation of what each means. Reflect on the scriptures that you are sharing. Consider how you might add some stories about how these truths have affected your own life. Find someone who will role-play with you so you can "practice" sharing the Roman Road with them. You may want to recruit unbelievers for this task as they will not only help you to learn, but will hear the gospel as well. How could you use this approach to help train others in your church to share the basics of the gospel?