

ROMANS 10:1-10 "Confess, Believe, That "Jesus is Lord", And You Will Be Saved"

Rom 10:1 "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved."

At the end of chapter nine Paul admonishes the Jews for attempting to approach God with a righteousness of their own as they used the Law to work their way to heaven.

Rom 9:31-33 "but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." 33 As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." [Isaiah 8:14; 28:16]

That was the bottom line. For all their outward show of self-righteousness, they didn't trust in God's way of salvation which was by faith, not by works. "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

Paul wanted the Jews to understand that for all their efforts they missed the point. But, Paul wasn't insensitive to their situation. And we see this as he once again conveys his love for his brethren after the flesh, being a Jew himself.

Rom 10:1 "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved."

This is how he actually started chapter nine.

Rom 9:1-4 "I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel."

Paul truly loved them, but he loved them enough to give them the truth. He didn't withhold what he knew would be offensive to them. In love he gave them what they needed for eternal life and that was the Messiah Jesus who was handed over to the Gentiles by Jews.

He understood their misguided feelings towards a teacher who claimed to be sent from and equal with the Father, One who said,

that unless they believe in Him they will not have eternal life. But Jesus didn't come in word only. He came in power and demonstrated that He was in fact Immanuel, God with us. The Jews had no excuse to reject their Messiah.

And yet despite this attitude, Paul says, that my heart's desire is that they come to find their only salvation in that Messiah. But more than a heart's desire, Paul says, that he prays to God for them. He interceded on their behalf. He came to the very Jesus who once came to him on the road to Damascus and asked that the Lord might be merciful to them as He was to Paul who persecuted the church.

Our heart's desire should be that the lost come to Christ. But it shouldn't stop there. We need to be praying for the lost every day. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to open their eyes so they may see their sinful condition and embrace Christ by faith that they may be saved from the penalty of their sin and enjoy fellowship with their Savior.

This was Paul's prayer for the Jew as well as the Gentile. But here Paul keys in on the Jews and implores them to turn their zeal away from self and unto the living God. And believe me they have a zeal.

Rom 10:2 "For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge."

It almost looks as though Paul commends the Jews here for their zeal. And in sense he does. Instead of complete indifference, the Jews earnestly desired to do the right thing. "For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God...."

But simply being zealous and sincere never, in itself, was a prerequisite for embracing the truth. Lots of people are zealous for God as they have come to understand Him. Mormons are zealous, Jehovah's witnesses are zealous, Islamic fundamentalists are zealous. But zeal alone never saved anyone.

And the Jew was always known for his zeal for God as he understood Him. But, like so many others, that zeal was not in accordance with knowledge. And by that Paul means the knowledge of God's truth. They substituted their own wisdom and knowledge and twisted God's word in such a way as to come up with an entirely different meaning for what God intended in His word.

William Barclay in his commentary on Romans makes this point: "Jewish religion was based on meticulous obedience to the law. Take the Sabbath law. It was laid down exactly how far a man could walk on the Sabbath. It was laid down that he must lift no burden which weighed more than two dried figs. It was laid down that no food must be cooked on the Sabbath. It was laid down that, in the event of sickness, measures might be taken to keep the patient from becoming worse, but not to make him better. To this day there are strict orthodox Jews in this country who will not poke or mend a fire on Sabbath or switch on a light."

These are some of the kinds of things Jesus confronted in His day when the Jews took the law out of context and missed the spirit of the law and condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath.

Little of this attitude has changed among orthodox Jews. I was watching a program on T.V. last week, and I think it was on the Discovery channel. And I believe it was the program "Inventions". There are a group of Jews in Israel who have struggled with the comforts of modern living, and observing the Talmud, which is made up of two books known as the Mishnah and the Gemara.

These are a collection of Jewish laws and traditions that define the limits of what a Jew can and can't do in life. But these Jews in Israel have invented a way of bending the rules. One of the comforts of modern living is using the phone.

However, since the phone uses electricity and since the use of electricity violates the law of work, they've come up with a device that can dial the phone while bypassing the electric pulses which lock in each individual number that is pressed. It works on a magnetic principle where the magnetic pulse replaces the electric pulse. The connection can be made and it's still considered kosher.

They had another invention but I came in late on it. But imagine, very bright men and women sitting around thinking of ways to get around the restrictions of the Talmud so they don't have to be inconvenienced and still conform to the law so as to be found righteous.

They have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. In fact, professing to be wise in their own eyes they have become foolish. By the way, this is not limited to the Jews. All men everywhere have their own way of being considered righteous outside of the righteousness of Christ.

Whether it's fulfilling a quota on how many doors you can knock on and share the Watch Tower, or thinking that if I haven't killed or raped anyone that that somehow counts to my credit with God; all men fall short of the glory of God and are found guilty outside of the only way of God's true Righteousness.

This is what Paul addresses concerning the Jew.

Rom 10:3 "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

The idea of this thought is that they *chose* not to know the righteousness that comes from God. And in choosing not to conform to God's righteousness they were left with only one other alternative. 'We need to establish our own righteousness to accomplish our salvation.'

The problem with that is that "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Act 4:12)

Charles Hodge says, "The grand mistake of the Jews was about the method of justification. Ignorance on this point implied ignorance of the character of God, of the requirements of the law, and of themselves. Those who err essentially here, err fatally."

And so Paul continues: Rom 10:4 "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes."

What Paul is saying here is that Christ is the end of the Law in the sense that he has ended any possibility of using the law as a means of justification since He fulfilled the law perfectly in His own life with the express purpose of taking the reward of that perfect obedience and putting it to the account of His chosen.

However, it's not as though the law was to be destroyed. That's why Jesus could say in Mat 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

In fulfilling or observing the law perfectly Jesus has met all of God's requirements that we couldn't and has satisfied them legally. By dying on the cross as a sacrifice, without any guilt, He has taken our place and paid our debt in full.

Having fulfilled all of the requirements and then defeating sin and death through His resurrection He can offer that life to us so that

we may partake in His righteousness by faith. Paul points this out in a variety of places.

Col 2:13-14 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, [Or your flesh] God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross."

In this fulfilling of the law He has abolished the penalty of sin which had separated us from the peace and love of the Father.

But as Paul says in Rom.10:4, this righteousness of Christ is only for those who believe. Unbelief is a rejection of God and like the zealous Jews the only thing to replace it is to establish a righteousness of their own which falls short and has everlasting consequences.

In reaching out to the Jews in love Paul continues to show how the law was never intended to be used to save anyone. He cites the one man every Jew looked to for direction concerning the law. Moses.

Rom 10:5 "Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." [Lev. 18:5]

What Paul is saying, by quoting Moses, is that if you are going to use the law as a means of salvation then you must live with the requirements of the law and the consequences of not obeying the law. The requirement of the law was that if you were to attain righteousness according to the law then you must obey perfectly without any violation in deed or thought.

This is what Paul conveyed to the Galatians in Gal 3:10 "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

He was quoting Moses in Deut. 27:26.

‘So, you want to come under the law as a means of salvation? Then you better never disobey any jot or tittle of the whole of God's word, for in the day in which you do you shall become guilty of all.’

Paul and Moses weren't the only ones to convey this truth. James tells us in Jam 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

Perfection was the requirement. In other words, what the Jewish Rabbis were asking of the people was an impossibility. That kind of self-righteousness would only lead to death and separation from God.

But Paul doesn't want to leave his listeners without hope.

Rom 10:6-8 "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) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

At first glance this may sound confusing. What is Paul saying? Well, he just got through saying that a righteousness based on the law binds that person to live with the requirements and penalty of the law. He also tells us that it is impossible to attain any righteousness through the law that would result in a right relationship with the living God.

Now he says, that a person who seeks the righteousness of God by faith doesn't live with the threat or a hopelessness that a relationship with God is impossible.

Rom.10:6-7 "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'

Paul borrows this language from the O.T. scriptures. In fact it's taken from Deu.30:10-14. Moses, again, speaks in such a way as to assure Israel that God's word and direction is not something which is impossible to find.

Deu 30:10-14 "..... obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."

Paul takes this thought and says to the Jews, 'though salvation is impossible to obtain through the law it is not impossible to attain.'

We don't have to go up into heaven to find it. We don't have to search the depths of the sea to discover what God desires for us to do. In fact, we discount what it is that Christ has done for us when we place God in the position of toying with us by not making salvation available to men in some impossible fashion.

To say that I must climb the impossible heights of heaven to find the answer to salvation is to bring Christ back down to earth to repeat what He's clearly done for us once for all. To plunge into the depths of the sea is the equivalent of trying to go where Christ has been, that is in the depths of the earth after His death. But He's no longer there and there is no need to try and find Him there.

This seemingly impossible quest for the truth is not something we have to only dream about. F.F. Bruce sums it up this way. "Here God says that His commandment 'is not too hard for you , neither is it far off.' It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea.... But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart that you can do it.

Salvation is attainable for the person who has eyes to see. In fact, God has done everything for us to make it as easy as repenting of our sin and embracing Jesus Christ by faith.

And that's where Paul goes in Rom 10:9-10 "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. 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.

Now what may appear to be simple may not necessarily be easy. The simple truth is that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for the penalty of our sins is all that it takes for us to enter into an eternal relationship with God.

However, many in this world find it difficult to come to grips with the fact that they need anyone outside of themselves to provide salvation. The sinful condition of man, the hardness of heart, the rebellious nature of prideful man, makes it impossible to reach out in humbleness to a loving God.

This is reminiscent of what Jesus once told His disciples.

Matthew 19:24-26 ²⁴ "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵ When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁶ And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

But as Paul says, no one has the excuse that God has made it impossible to attain to such a relationship with Him. The only person who is responsible for making it impossible is the one who wants to attain it through a righteousness of his own or just flat out rejection of the salvation of God by simple faith in Christ.

Unfortunately, this is the condition of all men outside of Him making it possible. With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. And this is why it is essential that God must first make us alive before we can believe.

Col 2:13-14 "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, [Or your flesh] God made you alive with Christ.

But let me make a comment on the simplicity of what Paul says here in our text. He begins with confession. Confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord. The Greek word for confess here is *homologeō* and it means to speak the same, to agree.

And so, what Paul is saying is that to have salvation by faith you must agree with all that Jesus says of Himself and that He alone can give salvation. It is also agreeing with God that we are sinners separated from God in need of this Savior.

But one of the things Paul says, that we must all be in agreement with God on, is that Jesus is Lord. The word Lord in the Greek literally means Supreme in authority. To come to Jesus Christ and agree that He is Supreme in authority is to agree that He is Creator, He is God, He is the One in whom we find our very existence and the One in whom alone we may have forgiveness and eternal life.

But to agree that He is supreme in authority is also to submit to that authority; to pledge to Him our allegiance, our loving obedience and our undying adoration and worship of the God most High to whom we owe all things.

But confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is not something we only do with our minds, though our minds must certainly be engaged. No, it's a belief that comes from the heart. But unfortunately, this creates another problem.

Jeremiah 17:9 ⁹ "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

The heart of man is dead toward the things of God and no one, as Paul said earlier in this letter, seeks for God, not even one. (Rom.3:0-18)

The only solution is for God to cause us to be born from above, or to be born again through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and this is accomplished only by God who can turn that heart from death to life.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Again, it is impossible for man to give himself a new heart, but only possible as God creates a new heart fit for desiring the things of God, including confessing that Jesus is Lord and receiving His offer of salvation by faith.

Yes, there are many who may say with their mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord but that doesn't automatically qualify a person for heaven. It's not just what we say with our mouths, but what we do with our lives from a heart which desires to please Jesus in all things.

We know this to be true from what Jesus Himself tells us.

Mat 7:21-24 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' ²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Charles Hodge makes the comment that, "saving faith is not mere intellectual assent, but a cordial receiving and resting on Christ alone for salvation."

Does this mean that we who confess Jesus Christ as Lord will always do everything in a perfect way? Of course not. But if we have truly believed from the heart, our new hearts, given to us by Christ, will prompt us to live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.

The flesh still wages war with us even though we're new creations in Christ, but our lives will not be dominated by the flesh. The fruit of that new creation will be the fruit of the Spirit which is always growing and maturing.

We don't have to fear if we have salvation or not if we have believed from the heart and our lives are moving in a Godward direction. What Jesus meant was that if the fruit of a person's life is only of the flesh then there is no reason to think that we can have assurance based on such fleshly evidence.

We are all at different levels of maturity in Christ, but no matter how small the fruit, if there is evidence that the fruit of the Spirit is at work, then there is the assurance that it is "God who is at work in us to will and to act according to his good purpose." (Phi 2:13)

And I like the promise from God's word which says in Phi 1:6 "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

When we believe from the heart that Jesus Christ is Lord, we must also believe that God raised Him from the dead. Our Lord is living and is interceding on our behalf today. Our salvation is based on life, not some dusty belief system still in the grave, like all religious beliefs which have a man-based system.

Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father and He is alive, having resurrected from the dead, defeating sin and death for us so that we may have eternal life.

And He gives us His Spirit who gives us life in Christ and who empowers us to live in this new life. Confessing with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord intimates that the world is aware of our relationship with God.

That doesn't happen under a basket. The light of life we've been given in Christ is meant to shine to the glory of the Father. And as

we submit to His authority and lovingly seek His face and walk in the power of the Spirit, this world we come to know that we are children of the living God and that they too may know this King of kings and Lord of lords who came to deliver us from the curse of the law and transform us into new Creatures in Christ by faith in Him alone.

Live by faith in His resurrection power, and resist the devil and he will flee from you. Don't get bogged down with the temptations of this world and don't become discouraged with the trials of life.

God is working all things together for our good. Simply trust Him on a daily basis and give Him all glory as He works in and through us for His good pleasure, always remembering that we can be confident of this, "that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."