

As we continue in Romans, I want to be sure that we are following Paul's flow of thought. In chapter eight we had that marvelous symphony of promises resulting from the work of Christ, ending with the fact that nothing can separate us from God's love. Then chapter nine began with Paul sharing his love for his Jewish nation. He touched on the sovereignty of God and the election of a remnant of Jews that had accepted the Messiah. He saw that all this was predicted by the prophets and was a part of the history of the nation.

In chapter ten Paul continues with his passion for his nation. ¹ *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.* Whenever Paul would enter a new city on his missionary journeys, he would first go to the local synagogue to proclaim that the Messiah had come (Acts 9:20). He wasn't declaring some new religion, but rather the fulfillment of the promises of the Jewish faith.

Commented [notes1]: Acts 9:20 (ESV)

²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

We can see the design of God in starting the churches with those who had a rich knowledge of the Scriptures. They could become the elders of the rapidly growing church and keep it in line with the God's word. We can also see the problems that sprang up in the Gentile churches that didn't have as great a knowledge of the Scriptures (1Corinthians 1:5). Faith alone without the moral background of God's nature from the Old Testament revelation led to some ungodly extremes. This was a big problem with the gnostic leaning churches. No wonder God fanned the flame of desire for the salvation of Jews in the heart of the evangelist Paul. Knowledge of the word to keep churches on track is just as important today!

Commented [notes2]: 1 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

² *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

³ *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.* Pharisees were as religiously zealous as one could ever be. The problem was in their whole attitude toward righteousness. They thought keeping the minutia of the law meant their heart was holy. When one has any idea of the righteousness of God, you quickly realize we will never measure up no matter how hard we try. That was Paul's message in the seventh chapter from personal experience as a Pharisee (7:10). The religious Jew would try and try, trusting in their own efforts while growing ever more proud of their difference from "sinners". If they had genuine knowledge of the righteousness of God they would have seen no difference between them and the people they referred to as "sinners" (3:20).

Commented [notes3]: Romans 7:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.

Paul has already shared in chapter four that two of Israel's greatest leaders, Abraham and David, were not saved by their works but by submitting to God's righteousness

Commented [notes4]: Romans 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

(4:3,6), which is to recognize you are a sinner and to throw yourself on the mercy of God. Then you continue by walking humbly with Him as you continue to confess and forsake sin.

We can see the same example in Moses' life. He had faith that the God of the Hebrews was the true God but tried to establish his own righteousness in his own power. The result was murder and abandoning his people. Then after forty years in the wilderness, a humble, broken man could be sent to do a job he knew he could not do, except for the fact that God was with him (Exodus 3:11-12). This is true knowledge! **There is none righteous, no not one** (3:10)! We are all dependent upon God's provision of righteousness.

I would liken works based religion to a spouse who tried to do everything for their mate except to love them from their heart. They could boast of doing everything their husband or wife asked, but if it was merely to show what a perfect spouse they were, the whole reason for their actions is misguided. Would actions with that motivation really please their spouse? And how much would they miss that was unspoken? A relationship is so much more than dos and don'ts. God's relationship with His us is a love relationship (Ephesians 5:32).

One might then ask why the law was given at all. The moral guidelines revealed the very heart of God. The worship regulations foreshadowed the Messiah. **The law as a whole was like a tutor that showed us our true condition and the need of a Savior** (Galatians 3:24). As our culture abandons moral principles of right and wrong, there is a decreasing realization of sin. In fact, in our hedonism, we arrogantly ask what right anyone has of labeling anything a sin. The education system tells us that truth is relative and what we feel is right for us is right. The result is youth playing the knockout game, insider trading, and fatherless children. Then society convicts them for actions they were taught aren't really good or bad. Abandoning a moral foundation of the law will result in chaos or arbitrary rules that have nothing to do with logic or consistency. Consider the laws that say a person that murders a mother and the baby in her womb is guilty of a double homicide, but if the mother kills the baby in the womb it is a "choice". The baby in the womb is a life or it isn't.

The law can't spell out every immoral act. Man will always come up with some loophole or new crime. We need something more than the law. We need the love that should have motivated the spouse in the example I gave. We need a passionate love for the One that is righteous and trust in His righteousness to save us. ***4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*** In Christ, we are free from the demands of the law. He kept the law for us. By faith, we receive His righteousness. In loving gratitude we desire to please Him in all that we do, not to prove we are righteous,

Commented [notes5]: Romans 4:3 (ESV)

³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Commented [notes6]: Romans 4:6 (ESV)

⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

Commented [notes7]: Exodus 3:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Commented [notes8]: Romans 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

Commented [notes9]: Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)

³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Commented [notes10]: Galatians 3:24 (ESV)

²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

but because we love Him for crediting us with His righteousness (2Corinthians 5:21). We will forever know that it was nothing we could do, and that it was all the grace and mercy of God. We simply exercised the faith He gave us to believe in what He did for us.

Some would say that can't be the case for it would mean we did something to earn our salvation. If someone put a gift in your hands, it doesn't mean you did anything to receive it. In fact, it takes work to reject it. I believe that God puts the gift of salvation in the hands of everyone, but sadly only a minority will accept it. We saw this so clearly in our Wednesday study in Luke. When those invited to the feast made excuses for not coming, the master sent the servant to invite the poor, the blind, and the lame. They are all of us sinners whose souls are blackened by sin. Then he sent him to the highways and hedges to compel more to come to his feast so that his house would be full. The invitation goes out to all (Luke 14:21-24).

Those who reject God's invitation and try to establish their own righteousness are reminded in the next verse that they must live all the law. ⁵ *For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.* I was surprised by how many times this verse was quoted in the Old Testament. In the law, God warned that it can't just be rules but must be our life (Leviticus 18:5). When Nehemiah and Ezekiel quoted the passage they were condemning Israel for forgetting the injunction the LORD gave to live the law (Nehemiah 9:29; Ezekiel 20:11-13). If you are going to be righteous through the law, then it has to be your life. You can never fail or you are guilty.

However, in Moses farewell address he spoke of a singular commandment that he said was not so hard to live (Deuteronomy 30:11-14). Paul quotes a portion of the passage that he sees relating to the Messiah. ⁶ *But the righteousness based on 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 abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).* No man could bring Christ to earth or raise Him from the dead. Only God could do this for us. The righteousness that is based on faith says God did for us what we cannot do. This is the gospel of salvation through faith in God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. It was the gospel of the patriarchs, and of all believers throughout time. God puts it in our heart, in every culture, in every age. It isn't some secret that you have to mystically be transported into a heavenly realm to discover. It isn't the wisdom of the dead that you must conjure up.

⁸ *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);* Continuing to quote Moses, Paul reminds his Jewish readers that Moses said it was in your heart. It is in loving God that we fulfill the intent of the law (Matthew 22:37-40). This was the secondary source for Jesus' answer

Commented [notes11]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Commented [notes12]: Luke 14:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' ²² And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³ And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'

Commented [notes13]: Leviticus 18:5 (ESV)

⁵ You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

Commented [notes14]: Nehemiah 9:29 (ESV)

²⁹ And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.

Commented [notes15]: Ezekiel 20:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live. ¹² Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them. ¹³ But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. ¹⁴ Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them.

Commented [notes16]: Deuteronomy 30:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ 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?' ¹⁴ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

Commented [notes17]: Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)

³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

to those who asked what the most important law was (Deuteronomy 30:16-18). You obey the commands by loving the LORD your God with your all. This passage says it is to choose life. It is to choose His way. Thus Jesus declared, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me."* John 14:6

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart; ⁹ *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰ *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.* God has put that in the mouth and heart of everyone but we must confess and believe to make it ours. You might ask how could it be in the mouth of someone that never heard? Paul will address that later in the chapter. This is part of what many call the Romans road to salvation, a set of verses from Romans that is used to guide someone to salvation.

In context with what Paul is saying and what Moses wrote, it means that there is an easier way to salvation than the impossible path of perfectly living the law. It is to love God, the giver of life and every good thing. **If we love Him we will place our trust in Him and choose life. We will choose His way.** God has put that truth in everyone's heart and mouth. We must simply believe and confess it. That makes it easier for us to understand why God is so severe toward those who reject salvation. He paid for it, put it in our mouth and heart, and grants us faith to believe. Jesus said that He even sends His servant to compel us with the invitation. What more could we ask? But fallen man still rejects this loving kindness.

The way that God provided is Jesus. For those who have the knowledge of His death and resurrection, choosing life, choosing God's way, will mean recognition of what Jesus did. Choosing life comes with the witness of the Spirit that the gospel is true. Jesus died for our sins. His resurrection proved His sacrifice was accepted by God. But we can't stop there. Knowing it and identifying with it are two different things. **Only those who are willing to confess it have truly made it their life.**

While this confession is to God, sincere confession to God will result in outward confession of faith to the world (Matthew 10:32). I remember a number of distinct times in my life when I had to choose if I wanted to be accepted by the world or identified with Jesus. If led by the Spirit of God, would I openly carry a Bible? Would I wear a Christian T shirt or a put a Christian message on my car? Would I stand up for Christ in conversations with non-believers? Would I attempt to turn conversations from the mundane to things of eternal significance? These are simple things compared to what our brothers and sisters around the world are faced with. For many today, it can mean your home will be burned or your job will go to someone else. It may even cost your life (Matthew 10:22).

Commented [notes18]: Deuteronomy 30:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.

Commented [notes19]: Matthew 10:32 (ESV)

³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

Commented [notes20]: Matthew 10:22 (ESV)

²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Most of all, we should be identified by our behavior that flows from our love for God and our love for others because God loves them. We are known by our refusal to participate in ungodly things. We should be known by our constant display of the fruits of the Spirit (Matthew 7:20). For many this public confession begins with their baptism. It is a way of declaring that they have died with Christ and been raised in Him to a new life (6:3-4). That is why I like for those I baptize to briefly tell why they have asked to be baptized. We confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord. Our life is surrendered to Him. We believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. His sacrifice for our sins was sufficient. Jesus took our sins upon Himself and was punished in our place so that we could take this simple step of faith to be right with God. This is what Paul wanted for the Jewish nation as well as for all mankind.

11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." Jews of Paul's day were especially reluctant to consider that God had been reaching out to the world. They saw themselves as the chosen ones, and they were. They were chosen to be priests to the world (Exodus 19:6). How could they be priests if they did not reach out to the world? Had they forgotten Jonah's mission to the Ninevites, or that story of Rahab, or Ruth, or the widow of Zarepheth (Luke 4:25-27)? Paul was quoting Isaiah 28:16b to show them that God's invitation to salvation goes out to everyone. It is not based on works or obedience to the law but on a trusting belief in the cornerstone, Christ Jesus.

The shame that we will avoid by believing in Him is the shame for our sins on Judgment Day. The only way to avoid that is to place our trust in Jesus. We will all stand before the Judgment Throne of God to give an account (14:10). If we start to rattle off our good deeds and acts of obedience, we will hear about our disobedience and failures. If our complete trust for our salvation is on Jesus, we will find there is no record against us.

Righteousness and salvation are God's free gifts to all who will believe and confess to Him. He has put it in our heart and mouth if we will just believe and act on it. Far from being exclusive, this is the most inclusive of all faiths. Jesus made the way for all. The one who will accept what God has done will know Jesus is Lord who died for their sin and was raised from the dead as verification that we can be right with God (4:25).

Questions

- 1 Why would God send Paul to synagogues to start churches?
- 2 What was wrong with the Jews pursuit of righteousness?
- 3 How do we see this in Moses' life?
- 4 Discuss the analogy with marriage?
- 5 What good was the law?

Commented [notes21]: Matthew 7:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Commented [notes22]: Romans 6:3-4 (ESV)

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Commented [notes23]: Exodus 19:6 (ESV)

⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Commented [notes24]: Luke 4:25-27 (ESV)

²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

Commented [notes25]: Isaiah 28:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: "Whoever believes will not be in haste."

Commented [notes26]: Romans 14:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

Commented [notes27]: Romans 4:25 (ESV)

²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

- 6 What happens when morality is removed from society?
- 7 Review the Deuteronomy quotes.
- 8 Where did God place the truth?
- 9 What does that truth say?
- 10 How can we be sure we are righteous/saved?
- 11 How do we confess?
- 12 Who receives the invitation to salvation?