

ROMANS 10

True Salvation comes When One Believes and Confesses That Jesus Is Lord of Life

(Romans 10:1-10)

As we've studied the book of Romans, you may have developed the idea that the Jews at the time of Christ were intentionally disobedient toward God. You may have felt that they wanted to do things their own way. That impression is understandable and somewhat correct, but don't lose sight of the fact that they were zealous (to eagerly pursue something) for God. They wanted the will of God fulfilled. Unfortunately, they didn't comprehend how that was to be accomplished because **THEY DIDN'T LOOK BEYOND WHAT THEY WANTED**. They really didn't understand what the will of God was. They didn't see how Christ was part of it. A symptom that exists today in many people who consider themselves Christians, who go to church every Sunday, serve on various church boards, and think themselves to be righteous. Paul sees these characteristics in his fellow Jews and desires with all his heart that they come to understand the truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. Let's now join Paul and listen to his words to the people he loves so much. We'll begin by looking at the first two verses of chapter 10, Romans 10:1,2:

*1 Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that **the Jewish people might be saved**.*

*2 I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but **it is misdirected zeal**.*

When zeal is related to knowledge it is a great thing, but when zeal is misinformed it is misdirected, and it's a dangerous thing. In fact the Bible tells us that it is not good to have zeal without knowledge, Proverbs 19:2:

2 Zeal without knowledge is not good; a person who moves too quickly may go the wrong way.

The Jews had what we could call **head knowledge**. They had information, but they didn't have the deep knowledge that comes through the heart. They had the kind of knowledge that made them puffed up with feelings that they were really smart (1 Corinthians 8:1). They had enough intellectual data in their heads to create pride, but they didn't have **true spiritual knowledge**. If you have true spiritual knowledge, **that kind of knowledge makes you humble**, the kind of knowledge that recognizes that **GOD IS IN CHARGE**, the kind of knowledge that brings holiness. Paul prayed in behalf of the Ephesians, Ephesians 1:17:

*17 asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you **spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.*

Paul prays that God would give them this true spiritual knowledge, **the kind of knowledge that brings humility and holiness**. What kind of knowledge do you think you have? Do you have true spiritual knowledge of the Son of God? Does your knowledge go beyond just having information? Do you have the kind of knowledge that comes from the experience of knowing the power of the presence and the truth of God? THE THEME HERE IN CHAPTER 10, IS THE IGNORANCE OF ISRAEL, a willful and unbelieving ignorance as we read in Romans 10:3:

3 For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way.

Paul goes on in this chapter to give five reasons for the ignorance of Israel; five reasons for the unbelief of Israel:

- 1) First, Israel was ignorant of the person of God (verses 2,3).
- 2) Second, Israel was ignorant of the provision of Christ (verses 4,5).
- 3) Third, Israel was ignorant of the place of faith (verses 6-8).
- 4) Fourth, Israel was ignorant of the meaning of salvation (verses 9,10).
- 5) Fifth, Israel was ignorant of the Scripture, the Old Testament of the Bible, the predictions made in the Bible (verses 16-21).

The whole chapter comes together to say Israel is lost because Israel is in the ignorance of unbelief.

Let's look carefully at each one of these five points.

1) Israel was ignorant of the person of God.

This was so devastating, you just can't imagine how it must have been understood by a Jewish reader. Looking at the beginning of verse 3, we read: "*For not knowing about God's righteousness.*" Paul says this to people who pride themselves about the knowledge of God. Continuing in verse 3, Paul writes: "*And seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.*" They don't understand what God is like. They don't understand one of the most basic attributes of God. They don't understand God's righteousness. They thought God was easier on sin than He really is. They thought God was more tolerant than He actually is. They thought God would tolerate whatever they did. I think people think the same way today. They thought God would wink at their sin and vice. They thought God would accept them the way they were. They thought they could attain righteousness on their own. That was a serious error

in judgment.

God is holy. He does not conform to the desires of others. He is the standard to which everyone must conform.

The attitude of the people of Israel can only be described as stupid, the kind of stupidity that comes from self-righteous arrogance, thinking you have knowledge that you simply don't have. The Jews reduced God to one of their own. A big mistake because God does everything right, which is what is meant by righteousness. People don't do everything right. So to reduce God to nothing more than another human being is a gross misjudgment of who God is. Because God is perfect He always does what is perfectly right. Any person who thinks they can reach that level is tragically misguided.

The Jews aren't alone in the way they thought. Just think about it for a moment. The run of the mill people in the world don't understand how righteous God is either. If they really understood how holy God is, do you think they'd live the way they live? Do you think they'd think that they could sin a little bit and God would still accept them? Do you think they'd say things like, *"I'm really a pretty good person, God wouldn't really think about sending me to Hell."*

That's because they don't really understand how much God hates sin. They want to create a God who will tolerate their sins. They have brought God down to their level. That was the condition of the Jews in Romans 10. They were ignorant of the person of God. They didn't know how holy He was and they didn't know how righteous He was in spite of all the writings of the prophets in the Old Testament of the Bible.

So many of the laws that God gave to reveal His absolute righteousness and His absolute perfection were laws that He gave to regulate how people should live. He spoke of how one should deal with people in business, how you should handle your money, how you treated strangers and orphans, the poor and the needy. All of these things are dealt with, so that society could function within God's perfect order. These were expressions of God's absolute perfection. For example, look at Deuteronomy 15:7-11:

7 "But if there are any poor people in your towns when you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted toward them.

*8 Instead, be generous and **lend them whatever they need.***

9 Do not be mean-spirited and refuse someone a loan because the year of release is close at hand. If you refuse to make the loan and the needy person cries out to the Lord, you will be considered guilty of sin.

*10 **Give freely without begrudging it, and THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BLESS YOU IN EVERYTHING YOU DO.***

*11 There will always be some among you who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to **share your resources freely with the poor** and with other Israelites in need.*

That's just one of many social commands that come from a perfect God. God also commands us not to commit murder. Do you know what God says in the Bible to do with murderers? Look with me at Genesis 9:5,6, and you'll find the answer:

*5 And murder is forbidden. **Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed.***

*6 Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, **FOR TO KILL A PERSON IS TO KILL A LIVING BEING MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE.***

God insisted on capital punishment. If you murder someone, you're to pay with your life. Why? Is it to deter crime? No. To get murderers off the street? No. When you murder someone you kill God in effigy, you in effect are killing God who is in that person, according to verse 6 above. The person murdered is made in the image of God. Murder is not only an extreme act of hatred, **it is a crime against the divine image of God.**

God is absolutely holy and the righteousness of God is seen in His laws about worship, about marriage, about family, society, and life in general. God is very specific in the Bible about such things as homosexuality, abortion, adultery, pornography, as well as many other things. All through the Old Testament God revealed Himself to be righteous and holy and yet the Israelites missed it. People are the same today. They want to search for anything they can find that might suggest God to be inconsistent or unfair, and all they prove is how little they know of what is really taught in the Bible.

God is holy and history is marked with illustrations of people getting exactly what they deserve when they defy God. Many people look at these things and think that is so unfair. Why? Because such people just don't understand how righteous and holy God is. If we could understand how righteous He is, we would know how unrighteous we are. People think God to be less holy than He is and thus they think He will be more likely to accept them as they are. You have to be perfect to be accepted by God. You ask then, "*How do I get to be perfect?*" The only way is to have your sin taken care of. The only way to do that is through faith in Christ's substitutionary death for our sins. When we have such faith, the righteousness of Christ is given to us as a gift of grace from God. The majority of Jews could not bring themselves to such faith.

The second reason for Israel's unbelief was that:

2) Israel was ignorant of the provision of Christ.

Romans 10:4,5:

4 FOR CHRIST HAS ACCOMPLISHED THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE LAW. All who believe in him are made right with God.

*5 For Moses wrote that **the law's way of making a person right with God REQUIRES OBEDIENCE TO ALL OF ITS COMMANDS.***

Where might Paul have gotten this information? Well, he got it from Leviticus 18:5:

5 If you obey my laws and regulations, you will find life through them. I am the Lord.

This is what Moses said about the righteousness of the Law and it simply means that if you think you can attain righteousness by doing the things commanded by the Law, then you are bound to do them all with absolute perfection. That's the way Paul sees Moses' statement in Leviticus 18:5. He uses it to emphasize the thought that to attain righteousness by keeping the Law of God means **you have to live that way all the time without making one single mistake**, which of course is what? Impossible. No one has ever been able to do this, nor will anyone ever be able to do it. The Israelites had a real problem accepting this truth.

The third reason for Israel's unbelief was that:

3) Israel was ignorant of the place of faith

Let's read Romans 10:6,7:

*6 But the way of getting right with God through faith says, "You don't need to go to heaven" (to find Christ and bring him down to help you).
7 And it says, "You don't need to go to the place of the dead" (to bring Christ back to life again).*

Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 30. Let's go back and take a look at Deuteronomy 30:9,10:

*9 The Lord your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and your fields will produce abundant harvests, for **the Lord will delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors.**
10 The Lord your God will delight in you **if you obey his voice and keep the commands and laws written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.***

God is calling them to obedience, but it's not external obedience, **it's a call to faith**. It is the **obedience of the heart** that God is after, not just some external behavior. A call to a true heart relationship here in Deuteronomy is based on God's covenant of grace, which means that **God loves you** and wants a personal relationship with you, even though you have fallen short of His expectations. This is a call to respond in faith to the goodness of God and His love for them.. Go with us now back to Deuteronomy 7:7-9:

*7 "The Lord did not choose you and lavish his love on you because you were larger or greater than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations!
8 **It was simply because the Lord loves you, and because he was keeping***

the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the Lord rescued you with such amazing power from your slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. 9 Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and constantly loves those who love him and obey his commands.

Why did God choose Israel to be His people? Was it because they were so good that God thought they earned such a privilege? No, it was simply because God loved them. It's just God's grace, His unearned favor. No one ever earns anything that God gives them. It is always given only by God's grace and mercy as a gift. That was true in 2000 B.C. and it's true today.

Romans 10:6 and 7 is basically saying that you should not think that you have to respond to God by ascending into Heaven or descending into the deep in order to find the truth. Don't think that you have to go on some impossible journey. The righteousness of faith is available to you; it's near you. It's in your mouth; it's in your heart; it's been revealed. It's in the covenant of grace. **All you have to do is simply believe and you'll receive it.**

You see the Jews were trying on their own to ascend to Heaven. That's what all religious systems that emphasize good works emphasize. Be so good that you can earn your way into Heaven. Both verses 6 and 7 are referring to trying to do what is impossible. No one can do these things. So Paul reminds them of Deuteronomy 30 and states that Moses says that the righteousness of faith is not available just for those who can do the impossible. It's available for anyone. Let me try and paraphrase verses 6 and 7 for a clearer understanding:

“Don't think you have to do the impossible (keep the Law). Don't think you have to climb your way to Heaven on the ladder of perfection. Don't think you have to go up there and bring the message back down to earth. Christ already did that. You don't have to do it. You don't have to go down into the abyss and bring Christ back from the dead on your own. God has already done that as well. You see people who believe in attaining righteousness by their own works are rejecting the work of Christ on the cross. In fact by rejecting Christ's work on the cross, they are crucifying Him all over again. They deny that Christ has done it all for you. God doesn't expect you to do the impossible. He has made the message of salvation available to you. Why not take hold of it and receive the gift of salvation? RECEIVE THE GIFT OF SALVATION THAT COMES FROM BELIEVING, NOT ATTAINING.”

That brings us to the fourth reason for Israel's unbelief:

4) Israel was ignorant of the meaning of salvation

Let's continue in Romans 10:8-10:

8 Salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is the message we preach—is already within easy reach. In fact, the Scriptures say, “The message is close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.”

*9 **For 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 IT IS BY BELIEVING IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU ARE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD, AND IT IS BY CONFESSING WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT YOU ARE SAVED.***

What exactly is this message Paul is talking about in verse 8? Well, Paul clearly explains the message in verse 9. It doesn't get much clearer than this. This is the message Paul preached over and over again. He preached it in Antioch in Acts 13:32,33:

*32 “And now Barnabas and I are here to bring you this Good News. **God’s promise to our ancestors has come true in our own time, 33 in that God raised Jesus.***

God’s promises have all been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul preached it in Philippi in Acts 16:30, where we read about the conversion of Paul's jailer:

30 He (the jailer) brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

*31 They replied, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with your entire household.**”*

32 Then they shared the word of the Lord with him and all who lived in his household.

But **what were they to believe?** What was the point of their faith? What was it about Jesus Christ that they were to accept? What does the last part of Romans 10:9 say? “*God has raised Him from the dead.*” What was it that Paul did to the jailer and his family immediately after saying these things. Look at verse 33, Acts 16:33:

*33 That same hour the jailer washed their wounds, and he and everyone in his household were immediately **baptized.***

What does baptism signify, when you go down in the water and come out? **The resurrection** of Jesus Christ. They must have gotten very clearly the message of resurrection. Acts 17:31:

*31 For God has set a day for **judging the world with justice** by the man he has appointed, and **he proved to everyone** who this is **BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD.**”*

How did God give proof to everyone that this indeed was the Messiah, that this was the Lord, the Judge and the coming King? **He raised Him from the dead; that is the key.** 1 Peter 1:3:

3 All honor to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is by his boundless mercy that God has given us the privilege of being born again. Now we live with a wonderful expectation because Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.

You might want to read the whole chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 on your own. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD WAS THE ULTIMATE PROOF OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST. It showed that He indeed was God in human flesh, able to conquer death and Hell and Satan. God the Father brought Him out of the grave and set Him at His own right hand. So when we read in Romans 10:9 that “*we are to confess with our mouths and believe with our hearts that God raised Him from the dead,*” you’re saying much more than just believing in an isolated event.

You’re saying that you believe Jesus Christ to be the incarnate God who came to earth, took on human flesh, lived a perfect life, died a substitutionary death, went into the grave and conquered death, came out the other side having purchased salvation for us, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, and one day will come as the Father’s appointed Judge and King to judge people and rule the world forever. All of that is bound up in the resurrection. The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior, the Perfect One, and the Sinless One. That’s what we’re called to believe. We are to believe in our heart all that the resurrection is intended to affirm.

At some point here we need to introduce James 2:19 into this discussion, so why don’t we do that right now.

*19 Do you still think it’s enough just to believe that there is one God?
Well, even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror!*

This is what we could classify as “*demon belief.*” Demon belief can have the right theology. Do you think the demons know who God is? You bet they do. In fact demons are monotheists, they know there’s only one God. They know God’s nature as well or better than we do. They’ve been around from before the world began, when God created them as angels. They’ve seen God’s works from that time to this day. They know all about the wonders of God and the work of Jesus Christ because they’ve seen it all just as it happened. They know each and every passage in the Bible. They know all about Heaven and Hell because they’ve seen both places. They have a lot of knowledge about God and Jesus. They’ve been in the Church from its very beginning as well, masquerading as pastors, elders, teachers, priests, bishops, and popes. They’re very religious. They also live in fear of judgment. They feel guilt over their sins. They know that judgment is coming on them and that they’ve been justly condemned to Hell.

So what are we leading up to here? Just this: there are many people who have all kinds of knowledge about God but they aren't saved. There are many people who believe that God exists and are not saved. There are people who fear God's judgment (Romans 9:20,21) and even cry out in fear, but instead of asking God to deliver them, they curse God instead. There are many people who are very religious and yet they are on their way to Hell. There's more to being saved than just knowing the truth about Jesus Christ.

What then is the mark of saving faith? Let's go back to Romans 10:10 to find out. Paul writes:

10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and IT IS BY CONFESSING WITH YOUR MOUTH, THAT YOU ARE SAVED.

What exactly is this confession Paul is referring to? The word comes from the Greek verb, *exomologeo*, which means "to say the same thing." Confession means to say the same thing. So if your mouth says the same thing, God will give you salvation. What is it exactly that your mouth is supposed to say? What same thing? Verse 9: "For 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." **Jesus is Lord.** Do the demons confess that? No. It's not enough to just believe, but you must believe and confess Jesus as Lord. That is the issue.

TRUE SAVING FAITH ACKNOWLEDGES JESUS AS LORD. Will you acknowledge Jesus as your sovereign ruler? That's the issue.

What did the rich young ruler do in Luke 18:18-34?

Jesus gave him a very simple order, "*Sell everything you have and give it to the poor.*" Why? Would he get saved by doing that? No. Jesus was testing him by determining **who was going to be in charge**. When the rich young ruler refused to follow Christ, He was in effect declaring that he refused to recognize the lordship of Christ. That was the issue. YOU CAN'T DESIRE TO STAY IN CHARGE OF YOUR OWN LIFE AND BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST. If we're going to confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. If we're going to "*say the same thing,*" who are we saying the same thing with? God. What does God say about Jesus? God says, "**JESUS IS LORD.**" Let's look at what God said in Matthew 17:5:

5 But even as he said it, a bright cloud came over them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him. LISTEN TO HIM."

That is to say that "**Jesus is in charge.**" God said that Jesus was Lord. The Bible says over and over again that the Father had committed into the hands of Jesus: judgment, authority, and power.

Just a couple more passages and we'll close. Romans 14:9:

9 Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that he might be Lord of those who are alive and of those who have died.

1 Corinthians 12:3:

3 So I want you to know how to discern what is truly from God: No one speaking by the Spirit of God can curse Jesus, and no one is able to say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

When the Spirit of God is at work in a person's heart, it is a work that results in that person **proclaiming the lordship of Christ.**

What did Thomas say when he saw Jesus? "*My Lord and my God* (John 20:28)." The word, "**GOD,**" has to do with DEITY. The word, "**LORD,**" has to do with SOVEREIGNTY, which is power and control.

The true heart that really believes, understands who Christ is and willingly submits to His authority.

The kind of belief we're speaking of here is what was spoken of in Romans 1, "*The obedience of faith.*" It is a faith that leads to the **obedient submission to the lordship of Christ.** So many people are ignorant of the person of God, the provision of Christ, and the place of faith. True faith believes all that is said about Christ, and true faith believes that all that has been said about Him is confirmed by **His resurrection from the dead.** True faith is confirmed when we **confess from our mouth that we are willing to submit to His lordship.** Is that the kind of faith you have? If it isn't, you'd better seriously devote yourself to developing that kind of faith. Because that is the only kind of faith that saves.

Next week we'll continue our study in Romans 10 with the fifth reason for the ignorance of Israel. Remember if you want to review any of this study, all the messages are on our website.