

### **Romans 10:1-13**

*Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

*<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup> "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> 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); <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

### **Romans 10:1-4**

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Verse 1 is making reference to his people of the flesh, the Jews as Paul continues his discussion from chapter 9. What a great example for us; he is always praying for them that they might be saved with an earnest heart. He uses the phrase "my heart's desire". James reminds us in 5:16b, "*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*". Do we have those in our families, friends or acquaintances that are not saved? Let us continue in fervent (or zealous) prayer for them, as many of you do, that they would come to realize that depending on Jesus instead of self is the only way to live life; that there is no greater joy than to be in the will of our Lord doing what He has called us to do.

In verses 2 to 4, Paul explains that while they have a zealousness for God, it is more a zealousness for His laws rather than what the laws are directing them to – His righteous requirement of them, and His desire to be in relationship with them. The "knowledge" in the NT Greek refers to "knowledge of things ethical and divine". In that misdirection, they chose to believe that adhering to the requirement for sacrifices and temple worship was sufficient; it didn't require a heart turned to God, that His ways were for them too. THEY decided what was sufficient was all the ritual, ignoring the point that the Lord was making – that none are sufficient without a savior. They ignored, as Paul says, the righteousness of God and what living under His authority meant for them. They chose to ignore the very savior that God provided, Jesus Christ, in whom all the laws were met and completed to perfection.

As we talked about last week, we need to have an honest and humble approach to our own behavior. The world teaches that our efforts yield fruit (for example, if you work hard in school, you will get better grades, that could lead to a higher education and a better job), but what God offers through Jesus is completely contrary. We will “naturally” try to apply this same worldly approach to our faith. But Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* Sometimes we struggle against this concept – we understand it’s a gift but we want to push and move along the sanctification process; we want to affect our righteousness as the Jews wanted to do.

If Paul assures us in Philippians 1:6, *“For I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will bring it to completion at the Day of Christ Jesus”* and the writer of Hebrews confirms that Jesus the founder, the author and the finisher or perfecter of our faith (Hebrew 12:2), then we see that our involvement requires receiving and submitting in obedience.

We receive our salvation through faith; we submit to the Lord’s authority over every aspect of our lives, over every situation in our lives. We don’t seek our own solutions as Abraham did with Sarah that resulted in Ishmael, but instead turn over every need and every desire to the Lord to do as He wishes. This can only be done when we trust fully in the Lord over what man can do for us, and we trust in His goodness toward us.

### **Romans 10:5-10**

*For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup> “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> 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); <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

In verse 5, the reference is to the Lord commanding Moses to tell the people that every law He gave them must be followed 100%. Leviticus 18:5 says, *“You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.”* That was hard work for every zealous Israelite; and completely impossible leading them to make sacrifice upon sacrifice for atonement of their sins. The Jews did not have another option. The law was given to them, and they had to live by them.

But Paul points out that the righteousness by faith is a completely different matter; in fact it is a simple matter, as close to you as you opening your mouth and confessing that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. It does not require you to go up to heaven and bring Jesus down to earth for this relationship, nor does it require or to go and retrieve Him from the dead

and bring Him back to life again. Because He is the Son of God who came as a perfect man, a perfect sacrifice fulfilling all the requirements of the law, when He died, death could not keep him and He ascended back to His place of Glory seated at the right hand of God the Father. Therefore, we have only to confess with our mouths and believe with our hearts.

As humans operating in a world that teaches the exact opposite, this simplicity is something we struggle with. But simple does not equate to easy, and so it is necessary for the church to be teaching what the life of Christ looks like, and how it is walked out using scripture that explains it all and provide all guidance. Reading scripture is not for the purpose of information; it is for transformation – to convict, encourage, exhort, teach us what it means to walk as obedient children of God. We must work hard in our churches to not turn our faith into “works” to earn righteousness and make a mockery out of the cross on which Jesus suffered. We must watch what we say to other believers that might lead them down that road. It is by faith alone through confession and belief.

It requires both confessing with our mouths and believing with our hearts, not just one or the other. And therein lies our challenge when we evangelize. We cannot know whether someone whom we lead to Jesus has believed in their hearts; we only hear their confession of faith. We remember that we are the vessels through whom the Lord works, and the result is His. He allows the wheat (the true believers) and the tares (those whose lives show no reflection of Holy Spirit transformation) to grow and co-exist until the day of Judgment when He will separate out these two groups and deal with each person individually. We are not the ones to judge if someone is in one camp or the other. All we can do is evaluate someone by their fruit, the transformation that is seen over time in their lives.

### **Romans 10:11-13**

*For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

As impossibly simple as receiving Jesus by faith is, it is truth. Confessing with our mouths and believing in our hearts is all it takes, and we can trust in His promise. We can trust because of the Promise-Giver who is God; faith in Jesus will never put us to shame. He wins every battle, and wins the war over sin and death.

Paul wants the church to understand clearly that there is no distinction between the Jews to whom all the old covenant law was given and the Gentiles because it is not based on the law; it is based on faith. The Lord makes no distinction between these two groups. It was always about the heart position of the believer and it still is. God doesn't treat the Jewish believer with any special blessings than the Gentile believer. All are the same in His eyes, His beloved children from every tribe and nation.

As children of God, we need to embrace this truth – God doesn't place more value on being from a certain tribe, being a certain color, being a certain height or weight. He sees the spirit of each person, and values the heart that is turned toward Him. 1 Samuel 16:7, God explains to Samuel as he is picking a king to replace Saul *"God sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart."* In 1 Kings 8:23 Solomon prays to God, saying, *" Oh God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart"*. When we can embrace this truth, we can appreciate what each person brings to the body of Christ through the gifts given them.

"Bestowing His riches on all who call on Him" refers to the free gift of salvation, the victorious life that Christ provides for us right now as we live. But note that there is an action on our part – "all who call on Him". The mystery that God ordains and chooses who will be His as we see in Romans 9, and the requirement that to believe we must take the action of confessing and believing that is stated in these verses must be accepted. We may often find scriptures that appear to conflict and are both true. Our God is not a god who fits in a box of our understanding. If we could fully understand and explain His ways, He would not be God. I am reminded of Isaiah 55:8-9 which says, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*