

Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church
Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 10, Verses 5-13
Notes from Tuesday February 8, 2011
Last Revised on February 11, 2011

Songs

Opening Prayer

Introduction

This evening we continue our study of the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Last week we began Chapter 10, covering just the first 4 or 5 verses.

Tonight we may get as far as Verse 13.

But first let's review a little.

Review

As we have repeatedly reminded ourselves,

the **overall** theme of Paul's letter to the Romans is ... the **gospel**,

What the gospel is, is explained in the first **four chapters** of this letter.

In **Chapters 5-8** Paul goes on to discuss the happy situation of those who are saved by it.

Then in **Chapter 9-11** Paul examines the sad situation of the Jews who have so far rejected Christ and the gospel.

This is what we are studying in this class presently.

Last week I spent a lot of time reviewing **Chapter 9** once again in detail,

and none of you expressed any comments or questions concerning that, rather difficult, chapter.

But let me ask again: Do any of you have **comments** or **questions** concerning Chapter 9?

Once again, but this time very briefly, let me remind us of what Paul wrote in Chapter 9.

Paul begins Chapter 9 by speaking of his deep **sadness** for his fellow Jews and expressing his **longing** that they should be saved.

That they are presently cut off, Paul points out, does **not** mean that God's word has failed.

Such has always been the pattern of God's dealing with Israel **throughout history**.

God has chosen them, and blessed them, and spoken to them,

but most of them have **rejected** God and fallen away.

Yet God has always preserved his relationship with Israel through a small, faithful **remnant**,

In Paul's day, this remnant consisted of the small number of Jews which accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel and Lord of the Church,

to which remnant had recently been ingrafted a significant number of Gentiles.

These believers in Christ were then, and are now, the remnant of Israel.

To reject Christ is to remain cut off from God.

Which is why Paul is sad for them.

This brings us to Chapter 10.

Now let's go ahead and reread the first four verses which we discussed at length last time.

Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 1-4 (Review)

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 1-4, in Japanese.

Thank you. Now will someone please read those some words in English.

1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

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.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Thank you.

As I have observed before, I do not think that Paul would have prayed to God as he says he does in Verse 1,

unless he were sincerely afraid that some of the Jews might remain cut off,

but also truly hopeful that some of them might still be saved.

They are, in short, lost but salvageable.

Paul finds hope in the fact that the Jews remain zealous for God.

Yet he is concerned because their zeal is misplaced.

It does not arise from a proper knowledge of God.

They are (to quote DT) “sincere but sincerely wrong.”

This is Paul’s point in Verse 2: ***“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”***

This amounts to Paul saying that the Jews are misunderstanding their own scripture! (cf 2cor3)

This was surely not easy for the Jews in Paul’s day (and their religious leaders) to hear,

precisely because they were so zealous.

But Paul himself had once been just the same.

He too had misunderstood. (And it is a matter of misunderstanding; Jesus said “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”)

Recently one of you wrote to me asking whether, in Verse 2, Paul meant to say that most of

the Jews had failed to understand the righteousness of God, or if he means to say that they had failed to understand that Christ is the Savior.

I think this is a great question.

Please consider this:

Paul and other zealous Jews who **had** finally come to understand that Christ is the Savior,

had **also** finally come to a correct understanding of the righteousness of God,

because it is only in knowing Christ as Savior that one comes to know the righteousness of God.

The **two** things are ultimately **one** thing.

On the other hand, the Jews who continued to **reject** Christ as Savior, thereby demonstrated that they had not yet come properly to understand the righteousness of God,

because, as has been said, Christ **is** the righteousness of God revealed. (cf 1:17)

Now it is true that David, Moses, Abraham, Noah, and perhaps very many others who had lived in pre-Christian days had nevertheless come to understand something of the righteousness of God,

and we understand that such people were saved by their **faith**,

however this only means that, despite having lived in the pre-Christian era, these men had come to know Christ in an **indirect** and **preliminary** fashion,

through the Law and the Prophets and the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed the very purpose of the Law and the Prophets was to signify Christ, until he should come.

During the Christian era, there may also have been men who had some preliminary and imperfect knowledge of God's righteousness before finally coming to know Christ as Savior.

But wherever Christ is proclaimed openly, those who reject Him are in grave danger, and demonstrably ignorant of God's righteousness.

 This explains Paul's attitude and his fervent prayers.

I received another email recently in which somebody observed that Christians today also seem to exhibit a lot of misdirected zeal.

 Indeed we do!

 In fact I believe that all of the words which Paul speaks here to his fellow Jews who have yet to accept Christ as Savior,

 are spoken with equal force to those of us who are part of the visible church of Jesus Christ but who seek to establish a righteousness of our own,

 through Bible knowledge, church activity, personal piety, acts of service, or anything else apart from Christ.

 I dare say that almost all of our zeal is misdirected!

 Because like the Jews in Paul's day, we misunderstand.

 We read in Verse 4:

(Verse 4)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

We struggled with this verse last week. (As others have done for centuries!)

 I hope that what we read tonight in verses 5-13 will shed more light on what Paul means by this.

 But before reading on, I think we can be sure of at least a few things:

 First of all, Paul cannot mean to say simply that the law has been abolished,

 certainly not in any sense that would set aside holy Scripture,

 or permit any behavior that is ungodly or unloving.

 Paul has dealt with such issues before now in this letter.

Paul's whole presentation of the gospel, here and elsewhere, is grounded in holy scripture.

For that matter, Jesus himself never sought to abolish the scriptures or any part of them.

On the contrary, Jesus elevated scripture in every way:

by obeying it himself, by requiring that others teach and obey all of it,

and by showing how all of it is ultimately about himself!

We simply cannot pit Christ against the law.

The second thing we know for certain is that only Jesus has ever perfectly kept the law.

All the rest of us have transgressed the law, and not just a little bit.

We have transgressed every part of the law, flagrantly, wantonly...

I have.

The primary virtue of the law, then, is that it shows us just how far short we fall of the glory of God,

and how absolutely, how desperately we need a savior.

I believe that this is a consistent teaching of the whole Bible, Old Testament and New.

The Old Testament is a finger pointing to....a savior who is yet to be revealed.

Therefore when Christ comes, he **fulfills** and **completes** and **perfects** the law.

I think Verse 4 must take some meaning like that.

I have received at least one email from someone in this class that argues this point very well indeed.

Before we read on does anyone have any comments or questions?

Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 5-13

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 5-13, in Japanese.

Thank you. Now will someone please read those some words in English.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

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).

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);

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.

11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

12 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.

13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Thank you.

As I mentioned last week, it is probably correct to think of Verses 5-13 as being an extended explanation of Verse 4, where Paul said that, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*"

So, what is "the law for righteousness" to which Paul refers in Verse 4?

Verse 5 seems to begin to answer this unspoken question.

(Verse 5)

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

So then, the “law for righteousness” of Verse 4, which finds its end in Christ,

would seem to be related to the righteousness that is **based** on the law,

of which Moses writes,

And what Moses writes is “*that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.*”

This is a clear and unmistakable reference to **Leviticus, Chapter 18, Verse 5**

where Moses does, indeed, write about the righteousness that is based on the law.

The words quoted here are the words of God **Himself**,

to the effect that those who keep his commandments shall live by them,

whereas those who disobey his commandments shall surely die.

This is consistent with what God said to Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden,

and with everything that has happened in the Bible and in the world since then.

And this is consistent with what Paul has said in Romans 2:13,

that it is not the **hearers** of the law (esp. Jews) who are righteous before God,

but the **doers** of the law who will be justified, be they Jew or Gentile.

Israel is preeminently the place where God’s words have been spoken and **heard**,

and this in itself is a very great and wonderful thing, as Paul has been explaining carefully in this letter,

but the **hearing** of these words does not save Israel,

because Israel cannot **do** them,

hence they cannot **live** by them.

Therefore all of them must **die**.

Moses himself, as well as David, Abraham, Noah, Adam, and all the rest are proof of this.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And all surely **have** died.

Just as all of **us** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And we all surely **will** die.

Only one man has ever actually **done** the commandments,

and thereby actually **earned** the right to live forever.

Jesus.

This was **proven** and **declared** by his resurrection from the dead.

But **only** Jesus, the firstborn from among the dead, shall live by the law,

For everyone **else**, there must be some **other** way,

which brings us to Verses 6 through 8:

(Verses 6 -8)

But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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);

Verse 6 begins with the adversative, "**but**"

A contrast is being established here, between the **type** of righteousness just spoken of in Verse 5,

and another type of righteousness, which Paul is examining here and throughout this whole letter.

The righteousness of verse 5 was a type of righteousness which Moses spoke about in Leviticus 18:5 which is **based on the law** and which only Christ has ever done.

The other type of righteousness is **based on faith**,

and it is the only possible way to eternal life for any of the rest of us, as Paul has been explaining.

In the passage before us, the righteousness based on faith is personified --- i.e. figured as one who can actually speak for itself.

And what does such righteousness, the righteousness based on faith, have to say for itself?

It says first of all, "**do not say in your heart**, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'"

In the Greek text the expression translated "do not say in your heart" is identical to the expression found in the first part of Deuteronomy 8:17 and 9:4 in the Greek version of the Old Testament.

Please let's turn there

Deuteronomy 8:17 reads: "***Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'***"

Deuteronomy 9:4 reads: "***Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.***

In both of these passages and the surrounding text and, indeed, much of the the Pentateuch, God through Moses is warning the people of Israel not to make the **mistake** of thinking that they were delivered from Egypt and into the promised land through any power or righteousness of their own, but instead to put their trust in the Lord and to obey him, in which case they will live long in the land.

Israel has been thrust into the world to prepare the way for Christ, not because Israel is good, but because the whole world, including Israel, is thoroughly wicked.

Notice that this mistake is a silent, **inward** "saying in one's heart." Few in Israel would have made such a boast openly. Just as few in the church of Jesus Christ make such a boast openly. Yet Israel repeatedly did make this inward mistake and so do we. At least I do. Even as we are saying "Praise the Lord" we are saying in our heart "this is because of my power and righteousness." We almost constantly rob God of his glory. So God has always warned his people that this is not the Way to salvation. It is in fact diametrically opposite to the Way of salvation, which is God's free gift of grace.

Please note carefully that this is the gospel message shining right through the deepest heart of the Old Testament, which is surely part of the point Paul is making here, in Romans 10:6-7

How could anyone who ever read the Old Testament suppose for a moment that any form of self-righteousness was possible? Everything in the Old Testament cries out to us, to put our trust in God alone and to lean not on our own understanding or ability or goodness, but to rely on him and simply to obey him!

OK then, in addition to the two passages just cited, Paul also clearly has in mind another passage taken from Deuteronomy.

Please turn with me now to Deuteronomy, Chapter 30, Verses 11-15

And this is an interesting choice, which reads as follows:

(Deuteronomy 30:11-15)

"For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. 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?' 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?' But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.

The point Moses is making here, to the people of Israel, is that what God desires from his people is perfectly clear and perfectly reasonable. It is neither hard to know nor hard to understand nor hard to do.

God is **simply** good. He simply wishes for his people to be like him: to be and to do only what is good, like Jesus was, like Jesus did.

This is such a reasonable commandment, sometimes it seems, that it is easy to imagine that we might actually obey it, in our own power, and enter into eternal life by our own merit.

Yet the Bible teaches us that every person who has ever lived (except Christ alone) has failed this very simple and reasonable and easy requirement of God.

So we are all simply at God's mercy.

Righteousness based on the **law** leads to certain death for everyone, except Christ.

And nothing that is evil shall inherit eternal life.

Which is just as it should be!

I don't know about any of you, but I would not want to live forever if I had to live forever as my present sinful self!

Thanks be to God, therefore, that in accordance with His eternal plan,

Christ, who had no sin, has lived and died as an atonement for sin,

then he rose from the dead, proclaiming his innocence and his power,

and ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us in God's presence.

Not only that, but he has also sent his Spirit to live in us here and now,

effectively leading us to do the good things that God desires,

even in this life, albeit imperfectly

and perfectly in the resurrection when all evil has been removed far from us.

In Him and through him it finally is possible to do the commandment.

This is the righteousness of faith.

Looking back now to Romans 10:6-8

The righteousness of faith knows that it does not need to storm the gates of heaven or hell,

Jesus has done all of that already. We need only and simply to trust and obey him.

Which is good, because that is the only thing of which we are capable,

and even this only by the grace of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the **eternal** truth which reveals the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the words of Moses

and in all of the Law and the Prophets, if only we can read them correctly.

Always God has said to those whom he has chosen, “I have not chosen you because you are good to begin with, and you do not need to search high and low to discover what is necessary for life and goodness: all that you need I will provide. All you need to know, I will simply teach you, placing it in your hearts and minds (mouth) so that you can do it.”

You need simply to put your trust in me, accept the life which I graciously provide, and follow me in loving obedience.

If you sin against me, I may admonish you, but repent and turn back to me. I am compassionate and loving, gracious beyond anything that justice might possibly demand. Life is found only in me.

This we now know with great clarity, because Christ has come and manifested Gods’ righteousness among us.

In fact Christ is the full manifestation of **God** among men,

and God finally does not desire to be known **otherwise** than in and through person of Christ.

This (I think) is what the Jews are having trouble with!

Verse 9 reads

(Verse 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.

“becasue” looks back to Verse 8,

where the personification of the Righteousness which is by faith says,

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”

To which is added parenthetically ***“(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)”***

Simply to profess, **Jesus is Lord**, is the Only Way to salvation from evil and death,

unto goodness and life eternal.

The life of Israel, and all who claim to belong to her, was and is one of open profession.

Israel is the community of those who do confess their faith in the one true and Living God.

Hear O' Israel, they constantly proclaim in their assemblies, the Lord Our God, He is One

To them, as Paul has said, belong the Patriarchs, the Covenants, the Promises, the Law and the Prophets, and etc.

They know very much about God. They are Zealous for him. Their history and their culture is defined by Him.

Their reputation in the eyes of the world is associated with Him.

They have struggled mightily to obey him.

But by and large they have misunderstood God at the most important point.

They have generally failed to understand that God **alone** is Righteous

and that his character is fundamentally **compassionate**,

that He is inclined to forgive and free to **forgive** whomever and however he wants to.

His righteousness is imparted to us, all who are being saved, as **grace** and forgiveness,

not as an obligation or reward for our merit or accomplishment.

All that the Jews or **anyone** has ever needed to do, or been in any way capable of,

was to put their trust in God alone, or die!

which ultimately means trusting Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and Lord of the Church.

They must now confess that Jesus and YHVH are One!!

This is something that no Godly Jew will **ever** do,

except as an expression of the most sincere belief,

and fervent repentance.

true conversion.(c.f. Ac2.37)

Verse 10 reads

(Verse 10)

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Conversion is a matter of deep conviction and not of mere words or intellectual assent.

However such deep conviction will inevitably show itself in public confession.

There is, of course, unfortunately, such a thing as confession that is lacking in belief.

But empty confession is rare when the social cost of conversion is high (e.g. Islamic countries)

I supposed that few Jews in Paul's day would have confessed Christ without deeply true faith.

However in times and places where confession carries social benefits, empty confession is common,

and it is meaningless at best.

I grew up in a culture and in a family where confessing Christ had no real cost and, so, my confession of faith was fairly empty for many years, perhaps completely empty.

I pray that my confession of Christ is not empty now,

and I pray that yours is not either.

(Verse 11)

For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

Again, we have in front of us an eternal truth of the whole Bible,

Old Testament and New Testament.

The most important thing is to put all of our trust in God alone.

God has always looked beneath every surface, to the heart.

Indeed God knows his children before they are born!

And God does not show favoritism.

Verse 12 reads:

(Verse 12)

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.

God worked in a special way through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and the rest,

to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, who is the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the World.

That Gentiles are being saved should hopefully help to show the Jews,

just who Jesus really was and is.

This is what Paul is hoping for.

(Verse 13)

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

This is a quote from Joel 2:32,

part of a prophesy that looks to the end times,

and the salvation that God will pour out on all people.

Are there any questions?

Closing Prayer