

(Through the Bible) Romans 9-10

by Chuck Smith

Paul explains God's sovereignty and election, and how it relates to the Jewish nation and the Gentiles, emphasizing the importance of taking responsibility for our choices and decisions.

Duration: 1:22:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:38 - 9:4, Romans 11:26, Philippians 3:8

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing the message of peace and salvation to the nations. He highlights the love of God, who gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him can have eternal life and become children of God. The speaker emphasizes the responsibility of believers to proclaim this message and bring glad tidings of good things. He also mentions that God still has a plan to bring salvation to the Jewish people. The sermon concludes with a blessing for the listeners to experience the power, presence, and glory of God in their lives and to grow in faith through studying His word.

Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Romans, the ninth chapter. Paul has just closed the eighth chapter of Romans, in which he has taken us into the very peaks of the spiritual experiences that are ours in Christ Jesus, showing us that we have this glorious place in the Lord where nothing can separate us from the love of God. Neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor peril, nor nakedness, nor sword.

For he is persuaded that in all of these things we are more than conquerors, and that death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature shall be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Oh, what a glorious, beautiful place. Now, as Paul sees what God has done for the Gentiles in bringing them into this glorious relationship with God, and as he considers these blessings that God has poured out upon the Gentile believers, his heart now turns towards his brethren, according to the flesh, the Jews.

And Paul is going to show how that God in His sovereignty for the time being has set aside the Jew as a nation of divine favor. That the Jew today is no different from the Gentile as far as God is concerned. That they do not have, at this point, a favored nation status with God.

But that if they are going to enter into the richness and the fullness of God's love, they must come as the Gentile through Jesus Christ. Now, because this is considered treason as far as the Jew is concerned, and because Paul knows that he is going to be accused, no doubt, by the Jews of bitterness because of his rejection, he seeks to point out to them that he is not bitter against the Jew. And as he is going to talk to them about these issues of God's grace being poured out upon all and any who will believe, Jew or Gentile, he seeks to show from the Scriptures that this was prophetically declared and also seeks to declare from his own heart there is no animosity or bitterness against his brethren.

And he makes that plain in the strongest of statements beginning with chapter 9. I say the truth in Christ. I lie not. My conscience also is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.

So, how much can you affirm that what you're about to say is in reality the truth of your own heart? I say the truth in Christ. My conscience also bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have a great heaviness and a continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

That is an extremely strong statement that I do not believe that I could honestly make. And yet, Paul affirms that it is true in his own case. His conscience bears him record in the Holy Spirit.

That he has such a great heaviness, such a great burden for his brothers, the Jewish people, that he could even, if possible, wish himself accursed from Christ for their sake if it would bring them all salvation. This causes us to recall a statement by Moses in Exodus, the 32nd chapter, after Israel had utterly failed God. And God said to Moses, stand back, Moses, I'm going to wipe them all out.

And Moses interceded for the nation and he asked God to show mercy. And then Moses said, and if not, then I pray that you will blot my name out of the book of remembrances. Now, lest we exalt man and make God the villain and man the hero of the story, it is important that we recognize that these men could not have this great burden for Israel unless they had received it directly from the heart of God.

It was God who put in Moses' heart this intercession because God was looking for an excuse to show mercy. And so when Moses made this great declaration, and if not, then God blot my name out of your book of remembrances, God then said, I will show mercy upon whom I will show mercy. He retreated into his sovereignty so he could forgive them and show his mercy to them.

But it was God who prompted the heart of Moses. It was God who prompted the heart of Paul for this great burden for the people. Yet, that which Paul is expressing is not possible nor necessary, for there is one who has already been accursed by God in order that the Jews might be saved.

For Christ became a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs upon the tree. And Jesus already took the curse of God for man's sin and provided for Israel's salvation. So Paul's declaration, as noble as it is, is really, well, when my mother had incurable cancer and was staying at our home and we were taking care of her during those final days, she had experienced a lot of pain.

And yet, the angel that she was, never once did I hear her complain about the suffering or pain, yet we knew that she was going through it. But when we would slip into her room, we would find her hands raised as she would lie there in the bed, just praising the Lord and worshiping Him. And she spent her last days in just praising the Lord and worshiping Him, not able to sleep really because of the pain and all.

And so one morning, I slipped into the room and I was heavy of heart because of her condition. My mother and I were always very close. I feel that one of the greatest blessings of life are those women that God has placed around my life, my mother and my wife, my sister, my beautiful daughters, all of them godly women.

How blessed I am. But I knelt down at the foot of her bed there and I was just softly praying. And I said, Lord, I'm no hero, but I wish that You would take my mother's pain and just lay it on me for a while.

Let me bear it for just a few days that she might have some relief from this suffering. And never in my life have I experienced the presence of Jesus Christ or had Him speak to me so plainly as He did that morning. For Jesus came and He stood right beside me.

And He spoke to me and He said, Chuck, that's a foolish request, for I have already borne her pain for her. And I said, Oh, Lord, I thank You. And I realized that that was a foolish request.

Forgive me, Father, for my foolishness. And immediately, my mother was healed. The Lord had taken the pain.

And from that moment on, she did not experience any more pain. The Lord took it. And it was just a glorious experience of God's touch and the presence and the power of Jesus Christ demonstrated there.

I'm sure that after Paul made this kind of statement, the Lord's probably said, Paul, that's a foolish statement. Noble, yes. Expressing a deep burden and heart, yes.

But yet to wish yourself accursed for their sake is not necessary, nor would it do anything for them. As Paul realized, but he's just expressing the depth of his burden for those people. We are standing really before a giant.

And it's hard for us to understand this kind of a statement. Paul goes on to speak of his kinsmen, his brothers according to the flesh. He said, Who are Israelites? To whom pertaineth the adoption? That is, they were God's chosen race of people.

God had said to them, You will be my people and I will be your God. And God adopted them as his family. And then belonged to them the glory.

That is, that Shekinah presence of God. When the tabernacle was completed and all set up and they began the service, the glory of God or the Shekinah came down in the temple and the presence of God's glory was so great, the priest could not even stand to minister there in the temple. It was just the presence of God's glory, the Shekinah.

Unto them belonged this Shekinah, which dwelt in the Holy of Holies. Unto them were the covenants made. God established His covenant with Abraham in blessing.

I will bless thee. And then He repeated the covenant to Isaac and later to Jacob. And then later to David.

Unto them belonged the covenants. Unto them God gave the law. And unto them, God showed them how they were to worship Him in the temple worship.

And finally, unto them were the promises that God had made throughout the Old Testament to this people and to these nations, and especially the promise of the Messiah. They have the patriarchs, the fathers,

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And last of all, and of whom as concerning the flesh, the Messiah came, who is overall God-blessed forever.

Amen. That is an unfortunate translation. If you translate that literally, this is the strongest statement made by Paul the Apostle concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, for this particular verse translated literally from the Greek declares, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God overall blessed forever.

And so the declaration that Jesus is indeed God overall blessed forever. Now, they had received the word of God, they had received the covenants, they had received the promises, they had received the law. And so Paul said, not as though the word of God did not take effect.

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Now, that is using Israel in a spiritual sense. The word literally means governed by God, and it was a name that was given to Jacob after he had wrestled with the Lord all night long.

And in the morning when the light began to break and Jacob was a broken man, in a little while he's going to be meeting his brother Esau with 200 men. And the last time he saw Esau, he was threatening to kill him. He's a broken man.

The angel of the Lord finally touched his thigh and made him a cripple. And in this crippled, broken state, defeated, the angel said, let me go, the day is breaking. And he said, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

Really, that isn't quite as it sounds because Hosea tells us that he said that with weeping and tears. He wasn't now coming from a position of advantage, but from a position of desperation and defeat. And really should probably be, please don't go without blessing me as he was weeping and crying, a broken man.

And the angel said unto him, what is your name? And he said, heel catcher, Yaakov. He said, your name will no longer be heel catcher, but Israel, governed by God. Now, because a man says, well, I'm an Israelite does not necessarily mean that he is governed by God.

So not all who are Israel are really Israel. Not all who say, well, I'm a Christian are really Christlike, which the name is supposed to imply. Christlike, well, I'm a Christian.

You're more like the devil. So it's, it's not the name. And so there were those that were boasting, they thought, well, because we are Israel, we are of Israel.

You know, we're descendants of Israel. Well, not all are Israel who are of Israel. Not all of them are governed by God who descended from this man.

Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they necessarily the children of God. For God said, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. So just being a physical descendant of Abraham did not entitle you to the promises and the covenants and the blessings of Abraham.

For God was developing not a physical fleshly seed, but a spiritual seed. And Ishmael was the son after the flesh and God would not recognize Ishmael. Isaac was the son of promise.

The one after the spirit and God recognized Isaac. And later on, God said to Abraham, take now by son, thine only son, Isaac, as he refused to recognize the works of the flesh. Isn't it interesting that we so often

are seeking to offer to God works of our flesh, hoping that God might recognize them.

He won't. I'm really sort of grateful that he doesn't recognize the works of the flesh. Because I have some works that I just assume he not make note of.

He only recognized that work of the spirit. He only recognized Isaac. And so God said, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

That is, they which are the children of the flesh are not necessarily the children of God, but the children of the promise are the ones who are counted the seed. So Ishmael and his descendants, the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but those of the promise. Isaac, for this is the word of promise.

At this time, I will come and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca now just taking it one step further, when Rebecca also had conceived by our father Isaac and the children not yet born, and thus they had not done any good or evil up to this point. But in order that the purposes of God, according to election might stand.

Not of works, but of him who calls. It was said unto her while she was still pregnant, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less.

Now, immediately we might say, well, that isn't fair. And Paul does anticipate that reaction in verse 14. What should we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God, not fair.

He said, God forbid. How can God make that statement of children before they're ever born declaring? I love one and hate the other. And I've chosen the one over the other.

That does seem unfair, doesn't it? Well, don't look so sanctimonious. Of course it does. However, what we must take into consideration and we don't always take into consideration in these things is that God knows all things from the beginning and God knew the entire life history of Jacob and Esau before they were ever born, even as he knew your life history before you were ever born.

And because he knew that Esau would be a man of the flesh and Jacob would be more of a man of the spirit, though he was a deceiver, a conniver and everything else. God knowing all of these things. And it is through the foreknowledge that God made that decision and that choice.

The elder shall serve the younger. So we can't really fault God and say, well, they didn't do anything. And you know, God made the choice.

No, God already knew what they were going to do, even as God already knows what you're going to do. And that is why we are told in Ephesians that one of the blessings that we have is that we were chosen in him before the foundations of the world. How is it that God could choose me before he ever created the world? Because he knew me then.

He knew all about me then because God is omniscient. He knows all things and known unto him from the beginning are all things. And so on the basis of that foreknowledge, God made his election or his choice.

Thus, that we are standing not by our works, but by the fact that God has elected us. Even as Jesus said to his disciples, you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained that you should be my disciples, that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. So the Lord can say to every one of us tonight who are in Christ, you have not chosen me, but I chose you.

Now, when the evangelist said, raise your hand and choose Christ, I thought that I was choosing the Lord. But in reality, he had called me. He had elected me and he had chosen me already.

And I was only responding as he knew from the beginning that I would respond to his love. Didn't surprise God. He didn't say, wow, look at that.

Can you believe that he's going to join with us? You know, no surprise to God. He knew all the while, and that's why he elected me and chose me because of his foreknowledge. So is there unrighteousness with God? No, God forbid perish the thought.

For God said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and compassion upon whom I will have compassion. And remember, God said this when in righteousness, he should have wiped them all out. They had rebelled against God.

And the authority of God and God should have at this point wiped them all out and was even saying to Moses, stand back so that I can. And God was looking for the excuse to show mercy. And so he placed it upon Moses heart to intercede.

And God responded and said, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy and compassion upon whom I will have compassion. And God had compassion upon Israel and showed mercy. So then it is not of him that wills.

It's not by our resolves, nor of him that runs. But of God that shows mercy, the sovereignty of God in his divine election, in his predestination, in his choosing. It isn't that I made my great resolve that I have willed, nor is it my works that I have run, but that it might by stand by election.

God chose me. And thus, I can't really boast in what I am or what I have done or even what I hoped to do. All I can do is boast in the grace and the mercy of God that chose a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. Oh, that amazing grace of God.

For the scripture says and said concerning Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore, he has mercy on whom he will have mercy and whom he will, he hardened. Now, that doesn't sound fair, however.

Using Pharaoh as the example, as God declares, I will harden whom I will harden. As we go back to the story of Pharaoh, we read and Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord. And Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord.

And we read that 10 different times that Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord. And after declaring 10 times that Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord, it said, and the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Now, it is interesting that two different Hebrew words are employed here.

The one that says Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord is just as it is translated. But where it said, and the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, the Hebrew word literally is the Lord made firm or stiffened the heart of Pharaoh so that here is Pharaoh hardening his heart, hardening his heart, hardening his heart. And then finally God moves in and he firms Pharaoh in the hard.

He sets him really in that hardened condition. Now I do believe that if a man hardens his heart over and over and over against God, that that is a possibility that God will then go ahead and make firm that person's choice and decision. He will stiffen him in it.

And that, of course, is a tragic day because I believe that that constitutes really the unpardonable sin when a man has gone so far and hardened his heart against God that God then makes firm his heart. In John 12, 38, we read, therefore, they could not believe. Not they would not.

They could not. They had hardened their heart against Jesus. They had seen miracle after miracle demonstration after demonstration.

He said, if you don't believe me, believe the works that I do, because they testify to you. Thus, every miracle that Christ did was a testimony to them that he was indeed the Messiah. But they harden their hearts and they harden their hearts and they harden their hearts and they harden their hearts until finally John tells us, therefore, they could not believe.

Be careful if you are hardening your heart against God. Lest you come to that place where God will make firm your heart. Thus, God declared, those I will, I will harden and those who I will have mercy upon, I will show mercy.

Then you say, Paul said, well, then how can God find fault with me? If it was God who hardened my heart, then how can he find fault with me for having a hard heart? Because if it's God's will that I, you know, live like I do and then oppose him, how can I resist God's will? And he says, oh, come on, old man, who are you to reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it? Why have you made me thus? There are a lot of people who do not want to take responsibility for what they are or what they do. And thus they seek to blame God. They say, well, God just made me this way.

And they seek to blame God. Adam sought to blame God in the beginning. When God said, Adam, what have you done? He said, it's that woman that you gave to me.

Your fault. And man, it seems, seeks to blame God for what he is, who can resist his will. If God made me this way, I can't resist his will.

Has not the potter the power over the clay from the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor? And so Paul now introduces the figure of the potter and the clay to express to us God's relationship with man in demonstrating that awesome sovereignty of God over man. As the potter has the power over a lump of clay from the same lump. To make a beautiful, honorable vessel and to make a vessel of dishonor fit to be thrown away so God can create all kinds.

And so what if God willing to show his wrath and to make his power known endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath that were fitted for destruction. Now, God is long suffering. He was long suffering to Pharaoh.

He let Pharaoh get by with so much before he finally struck with power. There are people, unfortunately, who misinterpret the long suffering of God. Some of them misinterpret it as weakness.

Because God lets you get by with so much evil. And he hasn't already smitten you. You think, well, he's not able to, you know.

Or even worse, there are some people who misinterpret the long suffering of God as approval. Well, if God didn't like the way I'm living, why didn't he wipe me out? You know, he could have. He had every opportunity.

And, you know, and thus, because he hasn't wiped me out, it must mean that God approves these things that I'm doing. That is a tragic mistake when a person misinterprets the long suffering of God. God is long suffering, even with the evil, those that are prepared for destruction.

He lets them live their span of life so often, even though they are destined for destruction. He's patient. He's long suffering with him.

He puts up with an awful lot. But on the other hand, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared for glory. So God has prepared us for glory, that we might experience the riches of his glory, vessels of mercy, even us whom he has called, not just Jews, but also Gentiles.

And as God said in the prophecy of Hosea, I will call them my people which were not my people, and I will call her beloved who was not beloved. As God speaks through Hosea, the fact that the door of his mercy and grace will be open to the Gentiles, and he will call them his people who were really not his people, who were not the nation of Israel, and he will call them beloved who were not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, you are not my people, there you shall be called the children of the living God.

Now Isaiah also cried concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved. So not all are Israel who are descendants of Israel. Though the number as God promised Abraham would be as the sands of the sea innumerable, yet Isaiah said only a remnant of them, only a part of them are going to experience salvation.

For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. What shall we say then? The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling stone, which was Jesus Christ. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, a rock of offense, and whosoever believeth on him will not be ashamed.

So Christ became a stumbling stone for Israel and continues to be such today. And thus Israel, who sought righteousness through the law, never did attain it. However, the Gentiles, who did not seek righteousness through the law, but sought that righteousness through faith, have attained the righteousness of God.

Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 5, Except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God. That is a very alarming, shocking statement, and I'm sure that the disciples were just really taken back by that. Because no one, but no one, followed the righteousness of the law more circumspactly than the Pharisees.

And yet Jesus said, Hey, unless you're more righteous than those fellows, you can't make it in. And I would imagine that the immediate effect of that would be, Well, forget it. There's no way I can do it.

And that would indeed be so if you were seeking righteousness by the law. You might as well forget it because you'll never be able to exceed what these fellows were doing. But the Gentiles, who were not seeking after this righteousness through the law, did attain to that righteousness.

Why? Because they sought it by faith. Now, Paul, the apostle who had attained the righteousness through the law in his own eyes, but not in God's eyes, as he spoke of his past in his Philippian epistle, if any man thinks he has whereof to boast, hey, I can boast more than all of you. For I was born of the tribe of Benjamin.

I was a Hebrew of the Hebrew. I was circumcised the eighth day concerning zeal. I was a Pharisee and I persecuted the church and concerning the righteousness which came by the law.

Hey, man, I was blameless. But those things which were gain to me, I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things. But, hey, I count it as refuse that I may know him and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Hey, I gladly chuck the past, count it as nothing that I may know him and be found in him, not having that righteousness, which is of the law, which I once had, but now this righteousness, which is of Christ through faith. I heard this illustrated once in a very interesting way. They said that there was this girl who was extremely poor, but had gone to a fashionable college, but had to work her way through the college as it came time for the graduation ceremonies.

She was to graduate that year. She wanted to have a new dress for the graduation ceremonies as all of the girls were getting new clothes, decked out in new clothes, because she was very poor and didn't have very, you know, only that which she was able to provide the meager wages that she had. She went down to the Five and Dime and bought one of these patterns and then bought some material at \$2.95 a yard on special.

And though she was inexperienced at sewing, she went home and carefully followed the instructions, laid out the patterns, cut out the dress and began to sew it together. Due to her lack of experience, the seams weren't that straight. But by and by, and after removing a lot of seams and resewing, she was able to assemble the thing together.

And so she went out into the dorm where the other girls were and she said, look, this is my new dress I'm going to wear to the graduation party. And they all looked at her finest efforts and smiled politely and told her it looked nice. But about that moment, Lady Bountiful came into the room and said to her, young lady, I would like you to go with me.

And so she went with this lady outside where there was the chauffeur driven car and they drove down to Saks Fifth Avenue and the valet parked the car as they walked in. And as they sat in the comfort of those plush lounges, the models came by wearing these beautiful, gorgeous original creations. And finally, a model came in with a dress that was so stunning and so spectacular that just as a reflex action, she just sort of gasped at its beauty.

Lady Bountiful noticed her reaction and called the model to come over closer that they might inspect the dress more carefully. And as the model was turning around and showing the various facets of the dress, she saw the little tag flipping and it was four thousand dollars. And she thought, oh, my, I didn't know there was that much money in the world.

Lady Bountiful could see that the dress pleased her, and so she ordered the clerk to wrap it up and deliver it to the car. When they came back to the dormitory, as she was let out of the car, Lady Bountiful handed her the dress and said, I hope that you will have a wonderful time at the graduation ball. She now went into her room and took the dress out and put it on and it fit perfectly.

And she walked out into the dormitory now to all of the girls that were there. And as they gasped over the beauty of the dress she was wearing, she said, look at my graduation dress. No longer the works of my own hands, but something that I could have never done for myself.

A gift of grace. And so we patch our rags together and we say, God, aren't I beautiful? How do you like it, Lord? You know, crooked seams, cheap material, uneven hem, and God clothes us in his righteousness. Something that we could never earn for ourselves, something we could never do for ourselves, but comes to us as a gift of God's grace.

So the Gentiles achieved that which the Jews could not achieve because they were seeking to find it by the law. But the Gentiles, accepting by faith, attain to the righteousness of God through faith. As the Jews stumbled over Jesus Christ, we've accepted him, we've received him.

And because of our faith in Jesus Christ, God imputes our faith for righteousness and he accounts us righteous, even as he is righteousness. For the righteousness of Christ is imparted to me through my faith in Jesus Christ. So I'm now clothed not in my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

So Paul is saying, hey, look, how do you like it? I could never have done this myself, though I was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and zealous and all. I could have never done this for myself, but look what God has given to me. Look how God has clothed me.

And hey, the rest of it is just junk as far as I'm concerned. The past glories and credits, nothing that I may know him. Now Paul again reaffirms his love and desire for his brethren after the flesh.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. They're zealous for God, yes.

Some of those zealous ones beat up the mayor in Jerusalem just a day or so ago. Because of some of his rulings that they felt did not coincide with their desires. They wanted Jerusalem to be shut down completely on the Sabbath day.

And he just let their sections be shut down, but allows cars to be driven in other sections. And so they beat up on him the other day. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness are going about to establish their own righteousness. And they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Now what Paul declared of the Jew then is still true today. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And so you'll see them at the wailing wall.

You'll see them as they tie the straps around the little box, the phylacteries. As they bind them to their foreheads. And as they put on their prayer shawl.

And as they go up to the wall. And they begin to bob up and down as they go through their prayers and all. A zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For they're ignorant of God's righteousness. And they're going about to establish their own righteousness. Now I had a Jewish fellow one night as we were talking say to me, Well Chuck, my father is a very religious man.

He says his prayers every day. He observes Sabbath. He loves God.

Do you mean to tell me that because my father does not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, he is lost? And I answered him, that is a very difficult question for me. Because I do believe that your father does love God. Has a zeal for God.

But what is he doing about his sin? You see, when God established his covenant with Israel. God established the various offerings that they must bring to him for their sins. God established that they had to bring an animal.

And kill the animal in their stead. That their sins must be transferred onto the animal, then the animal slain. And your father is not offering sacrifices.

He is not coming according to the covenant that God established by Moses for sins to be forgiven. Thus, how can your father have the forgiveness of sins which is essential for fellowship with God? And he told me how that they now feel that their good works will make them acceptable with God. And thus, their good works must outweigh their bad works.

And thus, they are seeking for a righteousness from works. Their good works and they have rejected that righteousness that God has established for them. So they are really rebelling against God's path of righteousness.

Having established now their own righteousness by works as Paul here declares. But they are not even doing the works that God require in the offering of a sacrifice. And thus, I have great difficulty with their present and current status before God.

For the Jew stumbling at Jesus Christ, going about by works trying to establish a righteousness before God. Paul declares they just haven't made it and can't make it. For they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

And Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. The law cannot make a person righteous before God. Nor can it give a person a righteous standing before God.

For if the law could give a man a righteous standing before God. Then it was not necessary for Christ to die. Jesus in the garden prayed, Father if it is possible let this cup pass from me.

If what is possible? If salvation for man is possible. By any other means, if man can be saved by the law. If man can be saved by his own efforts, by his good works.

If a man can be saved by sincerity. Then God let this cup pass from me. Let the cross pass.

Now the fact that Jesus went to the cross is God's witness before the world. That there is only one way that a man can come to God. And that is by the cross of Jesus Christ.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. For he said I am the way, the truth and the life.

And no man comes to the father but by me. You say Chuck that's too narrow. I can't accept it.

I'm sorry you can't accept it. But that's the way it is. And Jesus said straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life.

And few there be that find it. But broad is the way and broad is the gate that leads to destruction. Beware of those endeavors of men today to broaden the gate.

And we hear it on all sides. Well God surely loves all mankind. And God loves the Buddhist.

And God loves the Mohammed. And God loves everybody you know. And they're broadening the gate so that you breathe.

Oh well God loves you. Surely you'll be saved because you're breathing you know. But God has established the way through Jesus Christ.

And the cross offends people. Because the cross tells you there's only one way to God. If it were possible that man could be saved any other way.

The cross would not be necessary. For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law. He said that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

But the righteousness which is of faith speaks like this. Don't say in your heart who shall ascend into heaven. That is to bring Christ down from above.

Or who shall descend into the deep. That is to bring Christ again from the dead. But what does it say? The righteousness which is of faith.

What does it say to us? It says this. The word is close to you. It is even in your mouth and in your heart.

That is the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord. And will believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead.

You will be saved. Hey, you see how simple God has made it? Man seeks to complicate it. Man goes back to the righteousness of works.

If you will go around and knock on a hundred doors a day and peddle the magazines and wake people up, continue this faithfully, you will be saved. If you crawl on your knees for five miles to kiss the statue, you can be spared several days of purgatory. Man complicates the issues.

Now our flesh likes the complications because I would like to take some credit and receive some glory for salvation. I'd like to boast about what I've done. The dangers that I've braved for God.

The sacrifices that I have made. The dedication that took me through those dark, dank, smelly, dangerous swamps. But there's no place for boasting.

Neither now or eternally. When we get to heaven and when before the throne I stand in Him complete, Jesus died my soul to save. My lips shall still repeat for Jesus paid it all.

All to M.I.O. Sin had left its crimson stain, but He washed me white as snow. Where then is boasting, Paul said? It's eliminated. By keeping the law? No.

If I could be saved by keeping the law, then that encourages boasting. But it's eliminated because I am saved just through simple faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is so close to every one of you tonight.

If you will just confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Just say it. Jesus is my Lord.

And believe in your heart that God did raise Him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. It's close to you.

It's even as close as your mouth. Salvation isn't something far off, difficult to attain. Let's all, you know, get our climbing ropes and let's climb into heaven and let's bring the Messiah down.

Or let's put on our asbestos suits and descend into hell and bring the Messiah back from the grave. Do some great, brave, wonderful, marvelous thing. No, no.

Salvation isn't way off in heaven someplace. It's close to you, as close as your mouth. Confess Jesus Christ is Lord.

For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed. For there's no difference between the Jew and the Greek. Quite a statement for Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews to make.

No difference between the Jew and the Greek. That is as far as salvation is concerned. It's as equally simple to the Jew as it is to the Greek.

For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Now, it is interesting that this follows Paul's declaration about how God will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy and harden those whom He will harden.

And he speaks of the sovereignty of God having elected. That, you know, it might stand by election. But now he turns around and says, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now, when you call upon the name of the Lord, God doesn't go down the list and say, Let's see, is He one of those that we elected? And well, I'm sorry, your name is not on the list. No. You see, this opens the door to every man, no matter who you are, predestined or not, elected or not, chosen or not.

Whoever you are, God's promise to you is that if you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved. You say, well, I can't reconcile that with, you know, God's divine election and, you know, anybody being able to call. Well, I can't either.

But God didn't call me to reconcile. He just called me to believe it. I tried to reconcile it for years until I was into such mental gymnastics.

I was worn out. And one day I was in my office studying this, studying Romans here. And I just was so upset.

I put my Bible down. I said, God, I can't reconcile it. And I walked out of the room.

I was mad because I've been trying so long to tie the ends together. And as I was walking out of the room, God said, hey, I didn't ask you to reconcile it. I only asked you to believe it.

So I believe it. I believe that whoever you are, chosen or not, predestined or not, if you call upon the name of the Lord, you'll be saved. That's God's promise.

So we have the divine sovereignty of God, but we also have the human responsibility of man. And you will not be saved unless you do call upon the name of the Lord. And whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

So there's the balance. Never lose the balance. If you get out on the extreme, and unfortunately, some people do, they get so extreme in the election, predestination and all, they get so extreme that there are some churches that will not put a scripture on the board out in front, lest some sinner who has not been elected might walk by and believe in Jesus Christ and get saved when he wasn't predestined to do so.

Don't get extreme. If you get extreme on the Calvinistic side and in this election and predestination, then you've lost the center of truth. Truth lies in the center between extremes.

Yes, God is sovereign. Yes, God has chosen and elected and predestined. Yes, whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

They're both true. Though you can't reconcile them, they're both true. And tonight, whoever you might be, salvation is so close to you.

All you have to do is call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved. But, interesting question, how can they call upon the name of the Lord? How can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? And here now we have the basis for missionary activity by the church. Having received, having heard, having known the grace of God through Jesus Christ, we are now obligated to let the world know of that same grace.

I have a very good friend, Keith Erickson, whom I love in the Lord. He and his wife, Adrienne, beautiful people. I've had Bible studies in their home in Santa Monica.

Keith was by here the other day. And I heard Keith giving his testimony on television the other night. And he said that living here in Southern California, going to UCLA and all, he was 24 years old before he ever heard about Jesus Christ.

No one had ever witnessed to him. No, there's a tremendous failure someplace of getting the message out. For how can they call on him who they don't believe in? And how can they believe in him unless they hear about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone preached to them or proclaimed to them the truth? And how can they proclaim it unless they've been sent? And so the basis for missions, having heard, having believed, having known, we are now responsible to send those to tell others of this glorious salvation and righteousness that God has offered to all man, Jew and Greek, who will just simply

believe on his Son, Jesus Christ.

As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. Oh, I love that phrase. That's why I love the ministry so much.

Because I have the privilege to bring to men glad tidings of good things. Now, you won't get that on television, nor will you get that in your evening newspaper, watching the news or reading Time magazine. You won't get glad tidings of good things.

You'll get the forebodings of this world with all of its problems. But oh, thank God we have a message to tell to the nations, a message of peace and of light, glad tidings of good things. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in him would not perish, but can know the eternal life of God and the glory of God's eternal kingdom and can share as children of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, kings and priests in that glorious age that is coming.

Glad tidings of good things. But not all who hear obey. They have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith must come by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

So a person cannot believe unless they hear. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. It is through the word of God that we come to know God.

Knowing God, we come to believe and trust in God. The word of God is essential for the development of faith within my heart. Many times people say, oh, I wish I had more faith.

And I think that oftentimes we almost insult God. By our lack of faith. I've heard people pray, oh, Lord, help me to believe.

Lord, just help me to believe. I wonder what my response would be if I came home in the evening and said, honey, decided to take you out for dinner tonight. Thought we'd go out and get prime rib.

And she said, oh, help me to believe you, Chuck. Just help me to believe you, you know. And make me wonder what kind of a character am I that she's having such a hard time believing me, you know.

And yet how many times we take the promises of God. Oh, God, just help me to believe now. Help me to believe, Lord.

But faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. We are told in Jude that one of the ways by which we keep ourselves in that place of blessing. The blessings of God's love is building up ourselves in the most holy faith.

And of course, the way we build ourselves up in the most holy faith is through the word. You see, it's hard to trust somebody you don't know. And when a person comes up to me and says, oh, I have the hardest time trusting God.

What they are really saying is, I really don't know God very well. Because if you know God well, you'll have no problem trusting him at all. Now, how can you know him? Through his word, for he has revealed himself to us.

So faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. If you want your faith increased, study the word of God. But I say, Paul said, have they not heard? Oh, yes.

Very true. For their sound went out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. Yes, they did hear.

The story of Jesus Christ passed through all of the Jewish communities around the world. But I say, did not Israel know? First Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people. And by a foolish nation, I will anger you.

God sought by his work among the Gentiles, the pouring out of his grace and love and blessing, to provoke, to jealousy the Jew so that the Jew will seek after God through Jesus Christ. When they see the way God has blessed the Christian believer and their love for God and their love for the Lord Jesus Christ, that they'll be provoked to jealousy when they see the Gentile receiving the covenants and the grace and the blessings and the glory of God. As we were studying the book of Romans recently, I sought to illustrate this by this beautiful, sharp, darling little granddaughter of mine, who I love so greatly as I do all my grandchildren.

But this one is a special little angel. And she gives me the worst time because she knows how totally she has me wrapped around her little finger. She takes advantage of it and gives me a bad time because she's totally independent.

When it comes to grandpa, she loves to play her little independent games. So, I have found that by my making over my other grandchildren, she'll come elbowing her way in to get close to grandpa. So, when the other grandkids come over, I make a big to-do over them.

You know, exaggerated. Oh, come over here and sit on grandpa's lap. Oh, how nice you look today.

Let me hold you and all. And boy, she comes elbowing her way in and she's going to get right there next to grandpa. And I love it because I'm crazy about this little doll.

But it's necessary for me to get her close to me to provoke her to jealousy. Now, that's exactly what God is seeking to do with the Jews. He still loves the Jews.

Independent as far as God's way of righteousness and all. You know, but God still loves them. And thus, he blesses you and says, oh, come and receive the kingdom and into the joys and the blessings and all.

And all the while, he's wanting the Jews to come elbowing, which is a trait for them anyhow, you know, to come on in and get close. So Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that were not my people. And by the foolish nations, I will anger you.

But Isaiah was very bold and he said, I was found of them that sought me not. I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me, but unto Israel, he said, all day long, I've stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. So God's grace and mercy extended towards the Gentiles.

But still, all day long, his hands stretched out to the Jew who refused to come God's way through Jesus Christ. Does that mean that God then is through with the Jew forever? No, we'll find out next week as we move into chapter 11, that he still has a plan whereby he is going to bring salvation to the Jew. May the Lord be with you.

And may the blessings of the Lord surround your life as you walk with him. May you experience the joys of his power, of his presence and of his glory. As God day by day showers you with his goodness and with his love.

May you begin to experience greater victory in your walk with Jesus Christ. As you yield yourself to that touch of God and as he molds and shapes you into that person he wants you to be. As he conforms you into the image of Jesus Christ.

And so may God bless you and may God work in your life this week in a very special way. And may faith be increased as you study his word.

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