

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 22ND - 23RD, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

### FAITH ALONE (ROMANS 10:1-4)

#### A LITTLE BACKGROUND TO SET THE STAGE

Romans 9-11 focuses on the special calling of the Jewish people that they missed. Paul was acting as a 2nd Abraham of sorts, trying to call his people back to where they needed to be with God.

- Paul was a dramatically converted Jew that both loved and was frustrated by his people for missing the truth of Jesus.

#### IT IS EASY FOR US TO POINT FINGERS

As we study the negligence and shortcomings of the Israelites in the past, we must also realize that we have followed a similar path in the United States.

- We're not loved more by God than anyone else, but our people have had unique freedoms and opportunities, and **we will be held accountable for our blessings.**

#### THE 2 BIG MISTAKES OF THE ISRAELITES

The 1st big mistake was, though they were called to be the mouthpiece of God on earth, they instead became inwardly focused. The 2nd big mistake is they established a standard of righteousness based on their works, not God's.

- The same problems prevail today: **we tend to put ourselves first and we have become self-righteous people.**

#### ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

Paul says that the Jews had "zeal...but not according to knowledge." Passion without direction is dangerous, and because the chosen people of God "attempted to establish their own righteousness," people were not only hurt, they were lost.

- **Our standard of right and wrong is "like rags" that always inevitably fall short.**

#### WE WILL ALWAYS MISS THE MARK WITHOUT GOD

If we choose to not be "submitted to God's righteousness," we get trapped in a cycle that is destined to fail because we cannot uphold the standard.

- The Christian is free because "Christ is the end of the law" for those that rely on Him for help. **If we live for Christ, He makes us good by His work on the cross.**

#### IT IS BY FAITH ALONE

The Israelites failed because they failed to believe, not because God didn't make the path clear. God doesn't expect us to be good enough to be saved, but to trust that He is good enough and wants to save us.

- It boils down to utter dependence on Jesus. **Only when we trust in His power can we live truly meaningful lives.**

#### PERSONAL (ROMANS 10:5-13)

##### FOR DISTANT TO PERSONAL

God has not changed, but His method of making His followers pure in the OT was through the Law, and though it saved people, it was somewhat impersonal.

- The Law was not a bad thing for Israel. It actually kept them healthy, safe, and established a reverence for God and His plans.

#### THE LAW WAS CLEAR THEN, FAITH IS CLEAR NOW

Paul uses Moses as an example (v7-8) of how the Law points us in the direction we are to go, but without faith in Jesus we are incapable of living a righteous life.

- The phrase, "The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," lets us know that **God is as close as a conversation and a desire to change.**

#### "THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF FAITH..."

Paul says if we will humble ourselves and "confess with [our] mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in our heart...[we] will be saved."

- **When the true seeker finds truth, they will repent for their rebellion against it. Saying "Jesus is Lord" is submission to His ways, but we must also live in belief of Who He is and what He has done.**

#### THIS IS NOT THE WHOLE OF THE GOSPEL

Hearing begs a response, and a response will activate the promises of God in our lives. The other half of the Good News is that we change.

- Paul says belief leads to righteousness, and confessing of the mouth leads to salvation. This simply means that **following Jesus changes our actions and what comes out of our mouths.**

#### WAIT, I DO HAVE TO DO SOMETHING?

- We cannot do anything to earn salvation, but once we have been saved by His works, we are called to work in a similar manner to bless others and grow our relationship with God.
- True salvation manifests itself. **We're not saved by baptism, community service, the display of God's gifts, or church, but these works should follow saving faith.**

## TRUE FAITH IS A PERSONAL JOURNEY

Yes, we have the help of a Christian community, but salvation only comes when we build a personal relationship with Jesus.

- The argument isn't free will, predestination, or who has done enough to earn salvation. V13 settles the point that **"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**
- This means color, socio-economics, nation of origin, political affiliation, education level, gender, past mistakes, and current situation cannot hinder anyone from having a relationship with God and being saved.
- **But again, the responsibility is on us to seek the truth and respond to it when we find it. No one else is to blame.**

### REJECTION (ROMANS 10:14-21)

#### GOING BACK TO PAUL'S DESIRE

Paul was writing the church in Rome in the hopes that they'd partner with him to spread the gospel.

If this were to take place, the Christian recipients of his letter had to know that the Gospel has to be declared to non-believers.

- **We often use catchy phrases to skirt the responsibility of speaking the Gospel because we're scared of rejection.**

#### "HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE WITHOUT HEARING...?"

Not only are we as Christians called to share our faith with others, we are also to be training up ministers of the Gospel to send out and preach salvation through Christ.

- To be saved we need faith, but faith comes by hearing the Word, and hearing demands someone to preach/teach. For this reason we must send people out.

#### UNFORTUNATELY, NOT EVERYONE LISTENS

Paul's whole point in Romans 9-11 is that Israel as a whole had missed the Savior that they'd been waiting on for centuries. Despite God's sovereign election on His side, Israel lived in a state of unbelief by their choice.

- **Everyone in this room has a choice today: to either respond to what we hear or to live in willing ignorance of God's call.**

#### "DID THEY NOT HEAR?"

Israel heard and saw Jesus Himself. They saw miracles and their prophecies come true, but their hard hearts rejected Him.

- The very people that heard the Bible every day of their lives in school and synagogues witnessed firsthand the teachings and proof that Jesus is God. **They had every opportunity to listen and respond.**

#### "DID THEY NOT UNDERSTAND?"

Paul calls Moses and Isaiah to the witness stand for this question. If one reads about the journey, trials, and miraculous provision to the Jews along with the blatant prophets of the OT, it is clear they were privileged with knowledge.

- **But, because they (privileged) chose to not respond to Jesus, the blessing of knowledge went to the ignorant.**

#### IT WAS A DELIBERATE CHOICE TO NOT LOOK

It wasn't that Israel didn't know, but that they chose to live "disobedient and defiant" lives.

- The mantra of our time is, "Do what you think is right, and don't let anyone tell you differently." **This self-righteous and exceptionally arrogant lifestyle choice will be the spiritual death of those that choose their truth over God's truth.**

#### WE WALK WHERE WE LOOK

- We will move in the direction of where our eyes and heart are pointed. What are we choosing to focus on? What are we allowing to speak into us?
- With access to so much information and evidence, do we have a desire to find the truth? When we find it, will we choose to focus on ourselves or the Creator?
- Have we taken our privileged lifestyles for granted, even becoming entitled, apathetic, and arrogant?
- Have we as Christians become inwardly focused rather than being the messengers of God that we've been called to be?
- It is all about what we are seeking. If we seek truth, we will find it (Mt. 7:7-8).

#### WE DON'T HAVE TO BE LOST

- Will we humble ourselves, call on His name, and submit to His ways? Do we understand that our defiance only ends poorly?
- Regardless of what we've done up to this point, we have this moment to make a choice to respond to God's call. We don't have to work to be saved, it is by faith in His work alone!
- Not only can we be saved, but we're called to spread the truth so others can be set free. Do we love others enough to put our image, popularity, and comfort on the line?
- It is remarkably simple: we must humbly confess that Jesus is Lord (has authority over us) and believe that He has died and rose again.

**Confession and belief yield salvation and transformation.** Rejection yields the repetitive outcome of mankind's efforts.