

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 21ST-22TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

THE END OF THE LAW (ROMANS 9:1-4)

Paul again brings up his heartache over the fact that his fellow Jews missed the gospel (vs. 1).

- Notice he said that his prayer is for them to be saved-but if it's all about God's sovereign election, why bother praying?
- Even after recognizing God's role in sovereignly electing some to salvation (Romans 9), Paul still knows his prayers are the means by which God works in the lives of others.
- So why did the Jews miss their Messiah?

REASON #1: ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE (VS.2)

- The problem wasn't that the Jewish people lacked zeal for God - in fact they had 613 written OT laws that they strictly adhered to, along with an exhaustive set of customs and traditions.
- Zeal for God and spiritual things is only valuable if it's attached to the right truths about God.
- One of the greatest myths of our culture is that any form of religious sincerity and devotion is virtuous and will lead to God.

REASON #2: SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (VS.3)

- The Jews missed Jesus because they sought to establish a "righteousness of their own", which led to them "not submitting to God's righteousness".
- God's standard is perfect and unattainable on our strength - but self-righteous pride leads to us creating our own standards of what is good and then establishing our value based on whether we live up to our own standards.
- But our own brand of righteousness falls short.

REASON #3: MISUNDERSTANDING THE LAW (VS.4)

- Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah - the law was a signpost that pointed to the Christ.
- Christ is the "end of the law" in that our obedience to the law is no longer the basis for our acceptance from God - Christ is.
- But when we believe that we can be saved by earning God's favor through religious observance, we miss the very thing the law points to - our need for Christ!

It was because of these things that the Jewish people missed their Messiah, and it's often these things that keep individuals from receiving Christ.

- Zeal without Knowledge - "What I believe works for me, and I think it's good enough".
- Self-Righteousness & Misunderstanding the Law - "I try hard to be a good person".
- Ultimately these things will blind any person to their need for Jesus.

EVERYONE WHO CALLS (ROMANS 10:5-13)

The law of Moses makes the path to righteousness through the law very clear - if you want to find life through the law, you must keep the law completely & perfectly (vs. 5).

- But the righteousness based on faith is based on Jesus, and we don't have to work our way "up to heaven" or work our way "down to the abyss" to gain Jesus (vs. 6-7).
- This is what makes Christianity different from every other religion!

How do we attain acceptance through Jesus? The "word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (vs. 8) - we believe & receive.

- Instead of going to these great lengths to earn and achieve righteousness by the law, we can immediately receive righteousness from God by trusting in the "word of faith".
- Paul is quoting Deut. 30:12-14 where God commanded Israel to trust His Word.

The emphasis in Deuteronomy is on trust of God in the heart, the inner spiritual condition, not simply outward acts of religious compliance.

- God's way of salvation is available and accessible - we don't have to perform difficult or complicated religious rites to be saved.
- All we must do is truly trust Christ in our inner hearts and confess and believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ (vs. 9).

To truly be saved, we must believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord, and God raised Him from the dead - true faith is a surrender to identity of Jesus as God and King.

- But mere intellectual agreement with the facts of the cross and resurrection isn't enough without accompanying action.
- What the heart truly believes, the mouth will confess (Lk. 6:45).

In the Roman Empire, confessing that "Caesar is Lord" was a sign of allegiance, loyalty, and devotion.

- So to, "confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord" is to publicly confess your total heart allegiance, loyalty and devotion to Jesus as the resurrected King over the entire universe.
- To confess, "Jesus is Lord" in Rome was an expression of your willingness to be martyred.

In the early church, baptism was the public, symbolic display of one's allegiance, loyalty, and devotion to Jesus as King and it wasn't an optional event in the Christian experience as it is for many in the modern church.

- Baptism usually occurred immediately when someone was converted (Acts 2:38, Acts 16, Acts 8) because of its physical representation of salvation.

Baptism (or any other religious act) isn't what saves anyone - it's just that true salvation always involves a TOTAL life confession that Jesus truly is your Lord.

- That confession begins with the mouth, is shown in the waters of baptism, and is manifested in a life of obedience and discipleship.
- If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, but your life doesn't show it, then maybe you truly don't believe it in your heart! (James 2:19)

These two things - genuine belief and public confession of allegiance - result in justification (being made right with God) and salvation (vs. 10).

- This is a promise of scandalous simplicity and it's available to everyone and anyone (Jew, Greek, male, female, rich, poor, etc.) who calls on the name of the Lord (vs. 11-13).
- Neither outward observance of religion void of inner faith or privatized belief void of public confession save.

HOW WILL THEY HEAR? (ROMANS 10:14-15)

Paul's mission in life was to, "bring about the obedience of faith [allegiance] among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake" (Rom. 1:5).

- The whole point in writing this letter to the Roman church was to prepare them to be a missionary outpost for future ministry in Spain (15:24).
- Paul wants this church to understand the importance of our responsibility as the Church to proclaim the message of the gospel.

CALLING REQUIRES FAITH (VS.14A)

- How does God save people? It's not through just seeing His evidence in creation, it's not through keeping the law or having good works.
- God saves people through them "calling on the Lord", which is a metaphor in the OT for worship and prayer (Gen. 4:26, 12:8) - no-one can call on the Lord if they haven't believed on Him.

FAITH REQUIRES HEARING (VS.14B)

- No-one can believe in the Lord if they haven't heard of Him.
- God has ordained that people must hear (or read, or understand the content of) the Word of God in order to be saved.
- If we know the gospel, God has purposed and commanded us to communicate it with those who don't know the gospel.

HEARING REQUIRES PREACHING (VS.14C)

- God could've chosen any means for the message of salvation to come - angelic messengers or writing in the sky.
- But God's way of bringing people to Jesus is through the preaching of the gospel.
- To preach means to "publicly proclaim" - that might not always happen from a stage or platform.
- We have a VITALLY important responsibility!

PREACHING REQUIRES SENDING (VS.15)

- God has been sending the message of salvation to the ends of the earth from the beginning.
- He still does through workplace/relational evangelism, church planting, missionaries, and disciple making movements.
- We MUST be willing and available to go and/or to send and support those who go.
- We all have a role to play - this is a team sport.

FAITH COMES BY HEARING (ROMANS 10:16-21)

Now Paul shifts his focus to Israel, showing us that the Jewish people are in a state of unbelief because they have chosen it.

- Yes, God sovereignly elects those who will be saved, but personal responsibility on our end is needed to receive God's Word and call on His name.
- The reason some were unsaved was that, "they've not all obeyed the gospel" (vs. 16).

It's interesting that Paul uses the word "obey" in vs. 16 as the appropriate response to receiving the gospel, not just hearing it.

- Real saving faith is obedience to the call of the gospel - which is to repent, believe, and confess allegiance to Jesus as Lord.
- "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (vs. 17)- though Israel heard, they didn't exercise saving faith in Christ.

THE TESTIMONY OF PSALM 19:4 (VS.18)

- The quotation from this Psalm proves that the word of the gospel went forth, "to all the earth" and to the "ends of the world", and yet Israel rejected it.
- It's interesting to note the explosion of the gospel in the Roman world in the 1st century- it truly did go to the, "ends of the earth".
- And yet, the ones who had the gospel right in front of them rejected it.

THE TESTIMONY OF DEUT. 32:21 (VS.19)

- God had told Israel that He would bring other nations close to Him to provoke them to jealousy if they took for granted His word - yet Israel ignored His Word, making them more accountable.
- Israel's rejection of God served God's purpose of bringing the gospel to Gentile nations.

THE TESTIMONY OF ISAIAH 65:1 (VS.20)

- The Gentiles were not a formally organized nation and had no spiritual heritage like the Jews did.
- But because of Israel's rejection, God took the message of salvation to those who "did not seek me" and those who "did not ask for me" - those without spiritual sophistication or a religious heritage.

THE TESTIMONY OF ISAIAH 65:2 (VS.21)

- The final verse Paul quotes was a condemnation in Isaiah of Israel's spiritual disobedience, pride, and self-righteousness.
- God had "held out His hands" - He'd redeemed, saved, provided, and protected His people.
- Yet, they rejected Him and crucified the Messiah He sent to save them.