

Israel's Religious Zeal Without Knowledge - Part 2

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 10:4-10

Preached on: Sunday, June 3, 2012

We find ourselves this Lord's Day morning in Paul's epistle to the Romans once again. So will you take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 10. This morning we will be focusing on verses four through 10. Romans chapter 10 beginning with verse four the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says this.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "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 which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.¹

As we have studied Romans chapter 10 thus far, we have all been convicted over our lack of passionate prayer for the lost, especially when compared to Paul's statement in verse one that his heart's desire and his prayer to God was for the salvation of his kinsmen. Having himself been delivered from his self righteous pride and from the wrath of God, he begs God to save his fellow Jews who have a zeal for God, but in accordance with knowledge.

And like so many people in our day, they had a very low view of God and therefore a very high view of themselves. Their rabbis had concocted all kinds of rules and regulations that would somehow allow them to earn God's favor, or so they thought. There is perhaps no greater evidence of the depravity of the human heart than its ability to deceive a man into believing that God is not so holy as he really is and that man is much more holy than he really is. Man is so utterly self absorbed, he will unwittingly create a God in his own image, a false God that he can manipulate and appease, a God that really didn't need to send his Son to be a sinless sacrifice to satisfy the justice of a holy God. That really wasn't necessary, because, after, all, man is able to satisfy God's justice on his own.

It is for this reason that it seems as though everybody in our culture goes to heaven. Just go to the average funeral if you don't believe me. No matter what a... no matter what the deceased believed, what kind of person he was, the families are comforted knowing that their loved one is in a better place now. People for the most part are clueless about the

¹ Romans 10:4-10.

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righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of man. The same mentality was true for the Jews. Paul has been teaching us that they were ignorant of God's righteousness in verse three. So what did they do? Well, they sought to establish a righteousness of their own.

The psalmist Asaph described God's hatred of this kind of willful self-deception that would invent a god that would accommodate sin. He said this.

But to the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes,
And to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, And you
cast My words behind you. When you see a thief, you are pleased with
him, And you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil,
And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother;
You slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I
kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you, and
state the case in order before your eyes."²

So with Israel's low view of God's holiness and high view of their own, Paul continues here in verses four through 10 to somehow convince them of their damning self-righteousness and the infinite standard of a holy God. And he also presents the simple yet profound plan of salvation.

Now, from this passage really emerges two categories that I believe will help us understand what the Holy Spirit would have us learn. He is going to expose, number one, Israel resented Christ's gift of grace. And then, number two, Israel rejected salvation by faith. And as we examine these great truths, I pray that each of us who love the Savior will rejoice in the salvation that is ours by grace through faith.

So, first, Israel rejected—or I should say resented—Christ's gift of grace. Notice verse four.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”³

Now the Jews absolutely hated this truth. The purpose of the law was to demonstrate that man could never attain the righteous standard of God. Its goal was to point man to the righteousness of Christ. Its holy standards could only be met by the sinless Savior. So all of the ceremonies could ultimately be perfected in him so that all of the sacrifices and offerings and purifications prefigured the spotless Lamb of God. The Jews just didn't get this. He came to do what the law could never do.

² Psalms 50:16-21.

³ Romans 10:4.

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It is interesting. If you think about it, what was impossible for man, Christ made possible. His sinless sacrifice for our breach of the law was, as Paul says, the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. So once the substance came, the shadow was no longer necessary. So Paul is saying that the goal, the purpose of the Old Testament law, to point man to Christ is now over. Christ is the end of the law. All of man's foolish and impossible attempts to fulfill the law is over. He can now receive the gift of righteousness, the righteousness of Christ by faith alone. This absolutely infuriated the Jews. It meant that their view of God's holiness was too low and their view of their own righteousness was way too high.

You know, Jesus smacked them right in the face with this time and time again. In Matthew chapter five verse 20 he says:

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."⁴

Now the people, they would have heard this and thought to themselves, what? We have got to be better than the scribes and the Pharisees? There is no way. I mean, these guys are absolutely fastidious with their Legalism and if they are not going to make it, we certainly will not make it. That was Jesus' point. Their arrogant self righteousness as a means of salvation really amounted to nothing.

Now some people will hear this and say, "Whoa, wait a minute. What I am hearing you say is that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way a man can be saved, that all other religious systems are wrong, that all people who are not believers of the gospel of Christ are going to hell."

Well, please, understand, dear friend. That is not at all what I am saying. That is what God said. He has made it abundantly clear. Jesus said in John 14:6:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."⁵

Now, some of my Jewish friends will respond, "Well, yes, but I don't believe in Jesus as being God."

Ok, then I will quote the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 64 verse six. We read that:

"...all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."⁶

⁴ Matthew 5:20.

⁵ John 14:6.

⁶ Isaiah 64:6.

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I can point you to David who said in Psalm 14 beginning at the end of verse one:

There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.⁷

And it is for this reason that the Lord spoke through Isaiah anticipating the only provision of righteousness through the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Messiah and he said this in Isaiah 45 beginning in verse 24.

"They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, And all who were angry at Him shall be put to shame. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel Will be justified, and will glory."⁸

So, again, Christ was a stumbling stone back then as he is now. Because of this, many people try to remove the offense of the cross, the offense of sin from a gospel message. All you need to do is turn on the television and you will hear this over and over again. In fact, whenever you see stadiums filled with people who are supposedly there to hear about Christ, you will know that ultimately there will be an appeal to man's delusion that says that his sin is not really as bad as some people might make it out to be. So we see this type of thinking and sentimentalized altar calls that subtly and perhaps unwittingly misrepresent the love of God and fail to alert sinners of the damning nature of their offenses before a holy God. Sinners must be warned as I would warn any of you that do not know Christ, you must be warned that God has judged your life and he has pronounced a verdict on your life and the verdict is guilty.

Instead, many people today are told how special they are, how loved they are, how desperately God wants them on his team. After all, we live in a culture where nobody loses, right? Everybody gets a trophy. You are not even supposed to get bad grades anymore. You know, you don't want to hurt anybody's self esteem. That is the mentality. Such a message merely reinforces the sinner's self righteous cry that is forever demanding some kind of undeserved affirmation.

One of the most popular evangelists of our day told a massive crowd of supposed seekers this, quote, "When God sent Jesus Christ to earth Jesus later, as he grew to a man, stretched his arms out on a cross to die for our sins. And he was saying at that point, 'I love you is much. I love you so much it hurts. I love you so much I would rather die than live without you,'" end quote.

⁷ Psalm 14:1-3.

⁸ Isaiah 45:24-25.

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But I ask you. Was that the primary purpose for which Christ suffered and died? Would you have me believe that the eternal self-existent sovereign of the universe is so lonely that he would rather die than live without us? Really? It is absurd. Jesus wasn't saying I love you so much I would rather die than live without you, but rather, he was saying, "I love you so much that I will willingly die on your behalf, because your sin is so great that I must die in your place to satisfy the wrath of God that you deserve. And unless you repent of your sins and place your faith in me, you will die in your sin and you will experience my wrath, not my love, forever."

That is the truth of the gospel. The gospel is the good news of undeserved grace. My friend, never is a man closer to grace than when he is quite certain he can never attain it. Never is a man going to understand grace until he understands the depth of his sin, because the gospel is the good news of undeserved grace. And to be sure, grace is unavailable to any person who thinks he deserves it.

Well, you see, this was the great problem that Paul was dealing with with the Jews, one that continues to plague all unbelievers.

As a footnote, the gospel message must be balanced between grace and wrath and love and judgment. Both are there. It can't be all love and grace and smiley face. Ok? But by the same token, it can't be all hell fire and brimstone or the other great perversion which is basically health, wealth and rhinestones. There has to be a balance. And Jesus had the perfect balance in his presentation. For example in John 3:16. We all know the text.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."⁹

There is the love, the mercy, the grace. But that was balanced against the bad news. The good news isn't really all that good unless you know how bad the bad news is. In verse 36 he went on to say:

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."¹⁰

Now the concept of God's grace was completely foreign to the self-righteous Jews, as it is to most people today. Satan had deceived them with this delicious lie that pandered to their pride, that would basically say, "You are not all that bad and God is not all that holy. He will wink at some of your sin."

⁹ John 3:16.

¹⁰ John 3:36.

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The apostle Paul understood all of this. He spoke of this earlier. You will recall in Romans three beginning in verse 20 he said:

...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.¹¹

Again, this is what Paul longed for his kinsmen to understand. He used to be just like them. In fact, he described himself to the saint at Philippi that prior to his conversion the said in chapter three at the end of verse four he had confidence in his flesh. And more than any others it was because he was, in verse five:

...circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.¹²

But he goes on to say:

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.¹³

I pray that each of you can echo these words and can count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear friends, there is nothing more valuable in life, nothing more important than knowing and serving Christ. You may find great pleasure in many things, some legitimate, many are not. But if your greatest pleasure is in something other than him, you are an idolater.

John Piper said it so well, quote, "God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in him."

¹¹ Romans 3:20-22.

¹² Philippians 3:5-6.

¹³ Philippians 3:7-9.

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So not only did Israel resent Christ's gift of grace and therefore cut themselves off from any hope of salvation, but secondly, Israel rejected salvation by faith. Notice verse four.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”¹⁴

Well, own self righteous people don't need the righteousness of Christ, because they are convinced that theirs is sufficient. So what is this thing about faith? Who needs to have faith or trust in Christ as our only hope of salvation when, frankly, my self righteousness is plenty good. So I will have faith in myself, people will say.

But Paul has just stated in the first three verses that seeking to establish your own righteousness is to have a zeal without knowledge. Sinners must have the righteousness of Christ. They must be justified or else they will perish in their sin. And according to verse four the righteousness of Christ is only available to those who believe.

You will recall in Acts 16 verse 30 the terrified jailer cried out to Paul and Silas.

“‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.’”¹⁵

You see, my friends, a man cannot be saved unless he knows the truth, unless he loves the truth, unless he surrenders his sin and embraces the truth and unless he is solely dependent upon that truth to save him.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we give our full consent to the story of the gospel. We rejoice in Christ's satisfaction of the law that we could not fulfill. And, therefore, we are justified through the redemption that is available in Christ alone.

Now to illustrate the role of faith in salvation, Paul points his Jewish audience to Moses, verse five.

“For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.”¹⁶

He is referring to Leviticus 18:5 where we read:

“So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Romans 10:4.

¹⁵ Acts 16:30-31.

¹⁶ Romans 10:5.

¹⁷ Leviticus 18:5.

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Paul is basically saying, "If you think that you can be perfectly obedient to the law, then the law will be your judge."

The problem is, that is impossible. The demands are too great. And as James tells us in chapter two and verse 10:

"...whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."¹⁸

My friends, it is important for you to understand that God's law is far more than some detached list of duties and rituals. But, rather, it is a unified whole based upon its core and supreme requirement and that is to perfectly love the Lord your God with all of your being and to love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.

In Matthew 22 verse 36 we read of a religious lawyer who asked Jesus:

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"¹⁹

Only the most self deceived fool could possibly believe that he could meet this kind of a righteous standard. I would ask you. Do you love God perfectly? Do you always put him first in your life? Do you obey his every command as he is revealed in his Word? How about your neighbor? Do you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself? You would never ever, one time, even had a selfish thought much less a selfish action, you always put their needs above your own. Well, obviously the answer is no. But, my friends, the Lord Jesus Christ did these things perfectly.

In our culture of utter disregard for God and for his Word, we are currently witnessing in our nation and frankly in the world, just a moral freefall which is also producing an economic freefall and so forth. I mean, think about it. We actually live in a culture that exalts homosexuality. That is absolutely mind boggling. We live in a culture... I was just hearing this week that is willing to make legal gender based abortions. Can you imagine that? We have gone mad with political correctness, an undeniable testimony of the wrath of divine abandonment upon an idolatrous, wicked people. And because of all of this, it

¹⁸ James 2:10.

¹⁹ Matthew 22:36-39.

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is very hard for most people to even remotely imagine God's standard of righteousness revealed in his law. Because, after all, we are all about happiness, not holiness, right?

May I remind you of just the 10 Commandments, many times called the Decalogue? It was a 10 fold summary of how we are to conduct ourselves in our relationship to God and relationship to others to fulfill the law's ultimate requirement of loving the Lord with all of our being and our neighbor as ourself.

Just to go through them briefly, do you worship any other god other than Yahweh? The punishment is eternal death, hell. If you love anything more than him, that is idolatry, punishment, eternal hell. If you misrepresent or perceive the true God falsely, we see this all the time. Go to your Christian bookstore. Read the book *The Shack*, all right? That is idolatry. It violates the Second Commandment. Punishment, eternal hell. Any thought or action that brings dishonor to God, that is taking his name in vain, hell. Any disrespect for parental authority, hell. Hating someone in your heart. That is murder, punishment, hell. Lusting after a man or a woman in your heart. That is the sin of adultery. Punishment, hell. Any dishonest act that takes something from someone else, that is stealing. Punishment, hell. Any false statement about someone else. That is bearing false witness against your neighbor. Punishment, hell. Any thought or desire in your heart to have something that belongs to someone else, that is the sin of covetousness. Punishment, hell.

How did you score? Anyone perfect? People will say, "Well, that is crazy."

No, my friend. That is God's holy standard. And when we violate one point of the law it affects the entire unity of that holiness. It is like a rock when it hits your windshield. You know how it makes a tiny little hole and then over time the integrity and the strength of the entire piece of glass is put in jeopardy and it begins to break apart and to shatter till eventually it is destroyed.

Beloved, in light of this, aren't you glad that what Paul says here that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes?

I need to digress for a moment. It is so sad to see Christians who try to mix law and grace. There is a dangerous movement within the Church today and it has a very heavy influence in home school curriculum and in home school... the whole home school movement even in classical education. It is a movement that goes under the heading of Theonomy which means God's law. And they insist that we must be governed by God's law. It is very heavy into the political movement, especially in the tea party and the right wing and so forth. It is also known as Christian Reconstructionism, dominion theology. It is heavily rooted in covenant theology. I am not going to get into all of the details of it. That is beyond the purview of what we are talking about this morning, but they are in their eschatology post millennialists. They ultimately believe that Christ will only return

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when Christians have advanced Christ's kingdom in time and in history and through the government and so forth. And what they do is they arbitrarily transport certain detailed applications of the Mosaic civil law into modern civil government in an effort to turn America into a theocracy and ultimately the entire world so that everyone will bow their knee to the rule of God. They have code terms like preserving America's family values, protecting America's moral compass. There is lots of names that are associated with this. R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, David Chilton with the National Center for Family Integrated Churches, Doug Philips with Vision Forum, maybe you are familiar with that ministry, which really promotes a very Victorian vision of patriarchy and that is not biblical and confused the authority of the Church with the authority of a father. They will do things like confuse the old covenant concept of families in Israel under the headship of a patriarch with the new covenant concept of the Church, the family of God under the headship of Christ and so they tend to diminish the authority of the Church and so forth. And in many cases these people will elevate personal preferences to a level of divine fiat, to a standard of holiness and church polity which ultimately leads to nothing more than Legalism.

Now, please, not all home schoolers, not all people in classical education or family integrated church movement or whatever, not all people hold to these things, but I want you to understand that at the core of it, what is pushing it are Theonomists and they really see Christian home schooling and home churches as the primary avenues of dominion. This is their primary way they believe in producing an American, even a world wide theocracy.

Liz Gore with the Institute for Study of the Religious Right summarized it this way, quote, "Home schooling and home churches allow for the literal isolation of Reconstructionist families from sinful realms of secular existence. Home schooled children are freed from the Statist humanistic indoctrination that public schools are so fond of, allowing for the reestablishment of the family as a unit under God equal to the civil government," end quote.

Well, all of this to say—and this is my warning, my friends—whenever you mix law with grace and you try to impose aspects of Mosaic civil law on our government and to try to get Christians to take dominion and somehow reconstruct the world under the law of God, you are doing something that frustrates grace. That is just not biblical. In fact, Jesus flatly contradicted this kind of thinking in Matthew 20 beginning at verse 25. He said:

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you."²⁰

²⁰ Matthew 20:25-26.

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Again, you have got to remember that the purpose of the law was not to create a world wide theocracy. Jesus will do that when he returns, when he establishes his glorious kingdom. The purpose of the law was to point men to Christ who became the end of the law.

Beloved, it is the gospel. It is not the law that will change men's hearts. That is why Paul said in Galatians 2:21:

"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."²¹

So, again, our message is the message of the cross. It is not a message of moralism, of dominion, of political activism. That is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:2:

"I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."²²

So, frankly, trying to impose Mosaic civil law on unbelievers will do nothing more than produce an even more virulent strain of self righteous legalists than what we saw in the first century, the very thing that Paul is trying to deal with here. That is all we need is a world full of Pharisees. So please be discerning. Whenever you mix law with grace, you diminish grace and you dishonor Christ.

So this is at the heart of Paul's argument. In order to perfectly fulfill the law, you must have something that is not yours. You must have the imputed righteousness of Christ available only through faith in him. And to demonstrate this, Paul personifies faith as if faith is speaking to us. Notice verse six.

But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "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)."²³

Now Paul is quoting here from Deuteronomy 30 actually in verse 11 through 13. And in that context Moses was giving instructions to the people of Israel regarding their entrance now into the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. He was telling them that God is going to curse you for your disobedience, but he will bless you for your obedience. But their obedience and subsequent blessing was always based upon sovereign grace and appropriated by faith.

²¹ Galatians 2:21.

²² 1 Corinthians 2:2.

²³ Romans 10:6-7.

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They needed to be like, you will recall, their spiritual father Abraham who could only be reconciled to God by faith, not by works as Paul stated earlier in Romans 4:3.

“AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”²⁴

So in Deuteronomy 30 beginning in verse eightwe read:

And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.²⁵

You see, God never intended for his law to be obeyed through mere externals, but rather from a heart of faith in God, a God who is long suffering, a God who will forgive sins for those who plead for his underserved mercy and grace, those who will believe with all their heart that he will grant this as Abraham did.

So heart felt faith in a merciful God who forgives sin was at the very core of God’s call to obedience. And then notice what God says in Deuteronomy 30 beginning in verse 11.

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’”²⁶

In other words, God made clear to them what he demanded. They didn't have to somehow ascend into heaven to learn what God expected. Heaven, you might say, came down to them. They didn't have to journey to some remote place beyond the sea or in the depths of the sea to learn of divine truth. But, rather, God revealed it to them through the inspiration of his servant Moses and through the other servants all through Scripture. And so because of this Paul says in verse six of Romans 10:

²⁴ Romans 4:3.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 30:8-10.

²⁶ Deuteronomy 30:11-13.

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So the truth concerning the righteousness of God through faith in Christ doesn't involve some impossible odyssey into heaven or into the bowels of the earth or some type of mystical esoteric journey into the universe. And it is so sad. There are all these books out there.

I did a search on it. I was thinking about this as I was preparing this for you. I was thinking of all the books that talk about the quest for faith, you know, the... the in search of faith, the journey for faith. And I came across the lyrics of a song on higher praise dot com, which I thought was interesting, a website for Christian worship music. And the lyrics speak about this presumed quest for faith that Paul has just refuted. The title of the song is *Lunar*, L U N A R by five o'clock people. That ought to tell you something. And here is how it goes.

The quest for faith is a lunar endeavor
Not warmer and brighter but darker and wetter
I trudge and i slip as i reach out for daylight
But grasp only fistfulls of night

By the way, guys, don't ever do this song, ok?

I wonder is doubt the way of faith, sometimes
I try to put it aside but never leave it behind
Balancing the weight of the state i'm in
On the head of a pin

It goes on from there. Finally it says:

So the search is on again again
To find what i'm doing wrong
And save this love i'm in
But i don't know where to start
It never used to be this hard

So i tread where angels trod
Be found my be my god

²⁷ Romans 10:6-7.

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Hard pressed
I must rest in you
Mystery meeting me
In silence
In innocence.

By the way, you don't meet God at innocense. You meet him in guilt.

How sad. How irrational. This is the word salad of spiritual schizophrenia, the babblings of a fool. My friends, the quest for faith is not a lunar endeavor. It is a humble submission to the truth that God has revealed to us in his Word. In essence, it is the gospel. It is exceedingly accessible to us and his righteousness is so available to us. It is through simple faith in Christ.

John 1:14, the Word that became flesh. It was Christ that came and dwelt among us and we behld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. And Paul goes on to elaborate on this in verse eight. He says:

“But what does it say? ‘THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART’ — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.”²⁸

See, you don't have to search for the way of salvation. We don't have to somehow hunt for a way to secure a righteousness that is not our own that God requiries. God has revealed it to us through his Word, through his Son, through the gospel. We don't need to search for faith. We need to exercise it. We need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Word of faith which we are preaching, as Paul said. And the righteousness of God is then appropriated by confession and by faith.

Well, what does that look like? Well notice verse nine.

“...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”²⁹

Now here Paul follows the order of Deuteronomy 30 and verse 14 that he just quoted in verse eight. We must confess with our mouth and believe in our heart. Confess, a compound word in the original language, ομολογεω (hom-ol-og-eh'-o). ομου (hom-oo') means the same. λεγω (leg'-o) means to speak. So it means to say the same thing. What is it that we need to confess here? Well, we need to say the same thing about Jesus that God says that he says and that is that Jesus is Lord. He is κυριος (koo'-ree-os). He is the master. God tells us we need to confess that. I mean, ultimately we are to confess that he

²⁸ Romans 10:8.

²⁹ Romans 10:9.

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is the creator and the sustainer and the consumater of all things who exercises his omnipotent authority over his entire universe. That is what a Christian confesses. This is what a justified saint confesses with his mouth. And, by the way, this is to be a public confession, a public profession of a slave's allegiance to his master and therefore a commitment to be obedient to his will.

I get so tired of these Christian or so called ostensibly Christian politicians, for example, that will say, "Well, I believe that faith is a private matter between a man and his God."

Baloney, not Christian faith. Christian faith is a public profession that Jesus is Lord. I get so tired of people who call themselves Christians who fear man more than the fear God. Where are the men and the women of the Church that will stand up for the Lord and be counted and carry the banner of the cross?

Jesus said in Luke 12, "If you won't confess me before men, I will deny you before the angels of God in the day of Judgment."

Dear friends, genuine faith is a public profession of your unwavering allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the one whom God has highly exalted and bestowed on him the name which is above every name which is the name Lord:

that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.³⁰

So, my friend, if you merely believe in Jesus as your Savior from sin, but you do not submit to him as the Lord of your life, you have no legitimate basis to believe that your faith is real.

John MacArthur has been at the forefront of this battle for years. And he makes this compelling observation. He says this, quote, "Contrary to much teaching today, Scripture never separates Christ's lordship from his saviorhood."

Let me pause there. Many people will say, "Well, you can believe in him as Savior and then maybe later on begin to follow him as Lord." Well, that is not what the Scripture teaches.

He goes on to say, "Lord is from κυριος (koo'-ree-os) which signifies sovereign power and authority. In the book of Acts Jesus is twice referred to as Savior, but 92 times as Lord. In the entire New Testament he is referred to some 10 times as Savior and some

³⁰ Philippians 2:10-11.

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700 times as Lord. When the two titles are mentioned together, Lord always precedes Savior. And even as some erroneously contend, Lord were it simply a synonym for God, the very term God by definition includes the idea of sovereign authority. That is of lorship,” end quote.

So, back to the text, not only must you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, but believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. We need to believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Why is this important? Because the resurrection of Christ is the supreme validation that his sacrifice perfectly satisfied God’s holy demand for the law. It is the Father’s stamp of approval, if you will, on his beloved Son who accomplished our redemption.

Moreover, our allegiance is to a living God, right, one who has conquered sin and Satan and death. And because he lives, so, too, we will live. Without the resurrection, my friends, there would be no salvation.

In 1 Corinthians 15:14 Paul says:

“...if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”³¹

And in verse 16 he says:

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.³²

And then, finally, in verse 10 he expresses the terms of salvation chronologically which begins with the heart that believes and then inevitably gives rise from the core of our being through our mouth that confesses our most passionate inward conviction. And he says, verse 10:

“...for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”³³

Well, Israel resented God’s gift of grace because it demolished their damning self righteousness and they also rejected salvation by faith in Christ alone because their faith was in their adherence to the very law that would condemn them. I pray that none of you are among the deceived and I pray that for each of us who know and love Christ, we will once again come away from this great passage of Scripture thanking the Lord for

³¹ 1 Corinthians 15:14.

³² 1 Corinthians 15:16-17.

³³ Romans 10:10.

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fulfilling that which we could have never done that he was the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe.

Let's pray together.

Father, we rejoice in these great truths. I pray that they will find lodging in our hearts and that the seeds of these magnificent doctrines will grow and bear much fruit in the life of every person who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And, Lord, for those that do not know you, I would once again cry out on their behalf that you will save them, that you will overwhelm them with the reality of their sinfulness and the infinite chasm between their sin and your holiness that can only be bridged through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is in his name that I pray. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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