**WITHOUT EXCUSE**

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**Romans 10 - Faith comes by hearing the Word of God**

**Romans 9 “**I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— **2**I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. **3**For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, **4**the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. **5**Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”

### Chapter 9 and 10 begin with Paul’s concern about the salvation of Israel. Bear in mind that when he uses the term *“Israel”,* it can mean several things depending on context;

### “The chosen people of the promised land” (Jews that are adherent or not adherent to the word of God).

### The *non-believing* Jewish people everywhere.

### The *believing* Jewish people everywhere, and also the Gentiles (non-Jews) who were “grafted in”.

### \*He is certainly NOT talking about just the “Church”, he never calls the church “Israel” to the exclusion of the others. That is known as *“Replacement Theology” or Supersessionism* – a false doctrine that undermines God’s promises and purposes for Israel and the Jewish people.

Chapter 10 opens with Paul explaining this topic a little further and the importance of Faith and Believing.

**ROMANS 10 “**Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

We must never take this lightly. Paul is extremely passionate about the salvation of the Jewish people.

**2**For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. **3**Since they did not *know the righteousness of God* and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. **4**Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

It is interesting that he writes “their zeal is not based on knowledge”, because it would be easy to believe that their zeal was based on knowledge alone. Knowledge about the law, knowledge about the Prophets, knowledge about the traditions that their people had followed for thousands of years. Paul admits that he was that way as well;

 **Phil. 3:5-8** “…a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6**as for *zeal,* persecuting the church; as for *righteousness based on the law*, faultless.**7**But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8**What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of *knowing Christ* Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.”

There is a difference between having knowledge of God and Knowing God.

If you ask me if I know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I may say yes.

But if you ask me if I really know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I would have to admit that I don’t.

This is what Paul was saying, the Jews knew all about God, but “did not *know the righteousness of God.”*

Jesus addressed this face to face with the Pharisees;

**John 8:17-19** **“**In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. **18**I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” **19**Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

Righteousness

Paul said of himself, that when he was a Pharisee; “as for *righteousness based on the law*, [he was] faultless.”

But when he described those who were just like he was, he says: “they did not *know the righteousness of God.”*

*The chapter explains this;*

**5**Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: “The person who does these things will live by them.” **6**But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) **7**“or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8**But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:

Paul presents this teaching using verses from Deuteronomy 30, a chapter of the Torah where Moses was speaking to the Children of Israel at the end of their 40-year journey from Egypt to the promise land. In fact they were right there at the finish line, the Jordan River, ready to cross over. Moses says these words to them;

**Deut. 30:11-18“**Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. **12**It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “*Who will ascend into heaven to get it* and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” **13**Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “*Who will cross the sea to get it* and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” **14**No, the word is very near you; it is in your *mouth and in your heart* so you may obey it.

**15**See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. **16**For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; *then you will live and increase*, and the Lord your God *will bless you* in the land you are entering to possess.

**17**But if your heart turns away and you are *not obedient*, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, **18**I declare to you this day that *you will certainly be destroyed*. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.”

The instructions were simple, obey the word and live, disregard the word and die. That was life under the law for many generations. The result was that the people’s hearts were far from God, and their experience was not in *knowing Him*, but just *knowing about Him*.

God wanted a people who would put their Faith/Trust (*pistis)* in Him, just like Abraham did (whose faith was credited to him as righteousness). He wanted a relationship with His people, not just a religion.

This is why Jesus came, to restore relationship (reconcile) people to God by Faith. The new covenant of Jesus blood that we talk about is based on believing in Him, not by works of keeping the law.

**Eph. 2:8** “For it is by grace you have been saved, through **faith**—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

In other words, **“*WE ARE SAVED BY BELIEVING, NOT BY BEHAVING*.”**

“Mouth and Heart”

**9**If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10**For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

* “declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,”
* and “believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.”

These two things were very significant, and very consequential to the believers in those days, especially in Rome. It was not as accepted to *“declare and believe"* as it is for us in modern America.

The Roman Empire was brutal and merciless, especially to those who were considered insurrectionists or conspirators. The law was to proclaim Caesar as Lord, and to positively deny any of the so-called conspiracies of a greater power than the Roman gods, particularly the growing rumor of *Jesus of Nazareth having been raised from the dead.*

Many Christians were martyred in those days for simply declaring that*, “Jesus is Lord,” and believing that God raised him from the dead.”*

The invitation to salvation by faith was to all people, Jews, Gentiles, ANYONE and EVERYONE!

**11**As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” **12**For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and *richly blesses* all who call on him, **13**for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

**14**How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **15**And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “*How beautiful are the feet* of those who bring good news!”

[Hey, nice feet! : ) ], This is actually a verse that Paul is quoting from Isaiah;

**Isa. 52:7** “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation,”

Paul asks the questions, “how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

It is so important to be ready at all times to share the gospel.

In fact, part of the *“full armor of God”* is;

**Eph. 6:15** ”having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

Shod means “*shoed*”, but it basically means be ready, willing, and able to preach the gospel at all times, and yes be ready to *”use words”.*

**16**But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” **17**Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

This is an important verse to memorize, it shows the power of the word of God.

**Romans 10:17** “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

When you speak the word of God into any situation, it changes the environment. It brings about faith. That’s not just in preaching to unbelievers, it also applies to believers, in building up one another’s faith as well.

Next time you’re in a situation that is stressful, chaotic, tense, or where there is overwhelming doubt, speak the word of God and see how it cultivates *faith* (trust) in God for those who hear it.

Paul continues chapter 10 by quoting Psalms and Deuteronomy;

**18**But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

“Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
    their words to the ends of the world.”

**19**Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,

“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation;
    I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

**20**And Isaiah boldly says,

“*I was found by those who did not seek me;
    I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me*.”

**21**But concerning Israel he says,

“All day long I have held out my hands
    to a disobedient and obstinate people.” <>

*[ Every once in a while, I hear from an old friend, a high school classmate, or a person I’d met years ago who thanks me for preaching the gospel to them. Often it’s someone I thought for sure was not interested in what I was saying, and in some cases outright rejected it, some I even forgot. But several have told me that over the course of their life, God revealed himself to them, and the words I spoke came to mind, and they eventually believed.]*

Never doubt the power of the Word of God.

The Lord says through Isaiah,

**Isa. 55:11** “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.”

Our job is to preach the word, plant the seeds, and make known the gospel. God does the rest. Don’t worry if you are received or rejected. Some will respond, others will not. That’s in the Lord’s hands. *“He is found by those who did not seek, and reveals himself to those didn’t ask for it.”* That’s up to Him.

For some, the idea of preaching the gospel is terrifying or intimidating. Don’t let yourself worry about saying all the right words, or having the proper evangelistic technique. Just think about how much the people who God puts in your path need Jesus. In some cases, you are the best representative of Jesus that they have in their life.

Let’s just be *willing, obedient, and available* to preach the *word of God*, put it in His hands, and watch what happens.

Remember,

**Romans 10:17** “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”