

I. The Difference Between Works and Faith

A. Romans 10:1-13 . . . Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. [2] For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. [3] For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. [4] For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. [5] For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. [6] But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), [7] or 'who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." [8] 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, [9] that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; [10] for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. [11] For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." [12] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; [13] for "Whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved."

B. Prayer

C. In Romans 9:30-33, Paul reminds us of the duties or obligations God requires of us in order to be among those God chooses to justify and to give eternal life.

1. Now I want to remind you that this is not the first time Paul has spoken of such God ordained duties or obligations, for Paul began speaking of them in one form or another in Romans 1.
2. Of course, the one word that best defines our duties or obligations, is faith. And as we have seen from the beginning of Romans, there is no such thing as saving faith apart from a sanctifying life of faith, or what Paul calls the "obedience of faith." For as Paul says, "It is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified" (Romans 2:13).

3. In addition to reminding us that we must, by faith, fulfill certain duties or obligations in order to be justified, Paul explains why so many Jews are unjustified, and he says it is because they are pursuing justification by works rather than by faith.
4. And last Sunday, in an effort to describe the difference between faith and works, I gave you four comparisons, and I said the essence of the difference between the two is an attitude that produces behavior in keeping with that attitude. The four differences are:
 - a. Faith grows out of an attitude of humility. Works grows out of an attitude of pride.
 - b. The driving attitude of faith is indebtedness to God which motivates service to God for the sake of God. The driving attitude of works is entitlement from God which motivates using God for the sake of self.
 - c. Faith approaches God's will and word with the attitude that doing it as fully as possible is what matters most. Works approaches God's will and word with the attitude that knowing and telling others what God wants is equal to doing what God wants.
 - d. The attitude of faith toward holiness is that of being holy in all its behavior just as God is holy. The attitude of works toward holiness is that of being as holy as it has to be to get from God what it wants to get, while being as sinful as it desires to be without losing out on what it wants from God.

II. Faith in Jesus is essential to justification

A. In Romans 10:1-13, Paul primarily explains two things.

1. First, he explains why seeking justification by means of works is such a failure.
2. Second, he explains that it is relatively easy to believe in and obey Jesus Christ, which means it is relatively easy to be justified by faith.
3. But before providing these two explanations, Paul explains in vs 1, once again, that even though he is condemning the religious beliefs and practices of his own people, he still longs for their salvation.

B. Romans 10:2-4

1. Romans 10:2 . . . For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.
 - a. Paul is able to testify about the thinking and practices of the Jews because, being a converted Jew himself, he used to live as they still live. For example, in speaking about himself, Paul says:

- (1) Acts 22:3 . . . “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.”
 - (2) Philippians 3:5-6 . . . “circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”
 - (3) And in relation to rejecting Jesus Christ, Paul said in Acts 26:9-11 . . . “So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. [10] And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. [11] And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.”
- b. Like Paul, many of the Jews of his day were zealous for the letter of the law and the formal, public practices of the law, but were not zealous for God himself, or the whole-hearted, whole-life righteousness that God calls all mankind to practice.
2. Romans 10:3-4 . . . For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. [4] For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
 - a. Paul says in Galatians 3:24 . . . that the Law is the tutor who leads us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.
 - (1) Do remember how Paul finished Romans 9? He said those Jews who thought themselves to be justified, but weren't, were not justified because they stumbled over the stumbling stone – which is Jesus Christ.
 - (2) In other words, the unbelieving, unjustified Jews fail to follow the Law to its intended end – which is Jesus Christ, the perfect righteous One who died in our place so that based on His righteousness, we can, by faith, be reconciled to God.
 - b. Returning to Romans 10:3, when Paul speaks of God's righteousness, he is speaking of the righteousness that God requires for justification and eternal salvation. And as we know from the

previous chapters in Romans, this righteousness is like a single coin with two sides.

- (1) The first side is Christ's righteousness, which is a perfect righteousness, and which made Him the only worthy sacrifice to die in our place so by His death and resurrection we can be redeemed from the penalty and power of sin.
- (2) The second side is our righteousness, which is an imperfect righteousness, but which is intended to progressively grow from young to old, immature to mature, imperfection to near perfection so that we become new creatures in Christ Jesus.
 - (a) This is why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:15, that once we are redeemed, we are to no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.
 - (b) And Paul also says in Romans 6:12-13, that we are to live like Christ, which means no longer allowing sin to reign in us so that we obey its sinful desires. Instead, we are to present ourselves to God as those who have been raised with Christ from the dead, and we are to present righteous living to God in the day-to-day affairs of life.
3. The point here in Romans 10:3-4, is that the Jews rejected, not just one side, but both sides of the coin. They rejected Jesus Christ as their redeemer, and they rejected God's standard of righteousness for day-to-day living. And in place of Jesus Christ and God's standard of righteousness, they implemented their own standard by which, in keeping, they fully expected God to justify them.

- C. Romans 10:5 . . . For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.
1. This is a profound statement whose essence we looked at last week when examining Romans 9:30-33. And the truth here is that there is a righteousness in keeping the law that results in justification. God made this clear in several places, but I will give you two from the OT.
 - a. Leviticus 18:4-5 . . . 'You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God. [5] So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.
 - b. Ezekiel 20:11 . . . I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live.
 2. However, to be justified as a result of living by the law requires perfectly obeying the whole law. And anyone who is honest, knows

how impossible this is. For example, one unchecked sinful thought, one contemplated fleshly desire, one untamed passion, or one careless slip of the tongue, and we have failed to keep the whole law. In other words, if we look to keeping the law for eternal life, must keep the whole law in thought, word, and deed, and not be guilty of even the smallest sin.

- D. Romans 10:6-7 . . . But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), [7] or 'who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."
1. These two verses are quoted from Deuteronomy 30:12-13, where Moses is reminding the Israelites that God's law is neither inaccessible nor impossible to obey. What Paul does here is to take Moses' words about the law and use them to make the same point about Jesus Christ and the gospel. And Paul does this by pointing to Jesus Christ instead of the law.
 2. Romans 10:6 . . . But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) . . .
 - a. In other words, do not use the argument that Christ has not yet come to earth in human form to justify your unbelief in His redemptive work, as if this argument frees you from trusting in Christ for justification and from pursuing the standard of righteousness to which faith in Christ naturally leads.
 - b. This was a typical Jewish argument for NOT believing in Jesus or His standard of righteousness. And though we may not hear this same argument in our day, we hear similar arguments for unbelief. Therefore, it is our privilege to sow good seed and invite unbelievers to set aside their resistance and supporting arguments and consider all over again the gospel message.
 3. Romans 10:7 . . . But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows . . . or 'who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."
 - a. Here again, Paul is saying, do not use the argument that Christ is dead (*as if the story of His resurrection is a hoax*), to excuse your refusal to believe that He is the Messiah, the son of God, the redeemer of God's people, the only way to justification and eternal life, and the Lord of all.

- b. Though many of those who were resisting the gospel message were claiming that Christ never rose from the dead and therefore both He and His message were dead, Paul is making it clear that this argument is not only weak, it is absurd.
 - c. In fact, Paul himself presented solid evidence of Christ's resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 . . . For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; [7] then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; [8] and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.
4. It is my opinion that those who do not want to believe, will say whatever they must to support their unbelief. But still there are the misled and ignorant, who with some care and gentleness from us, may listen longer and consider more deeply the truths of the gospel and in time, repent and believe. Therefore, we are wise not to give up too quickly in our efforts to sow good seed in unbelieving hearts.
- E. Romans 10:8-9 . . . 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, [9] that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;
- 1. Vs 8 is a continuation of the Deuteronomy (30:14) quote, and again, Paul alters it enough to direct it toward faith in Christ, where Moses was using it in relation to the law.
 - 2. Moses was explaining that the reason the law is so accessible and so easy to obey is because it is in your mouth and in your heart.
 - a. In other words, because the Israelites had heard the law read to them, had the law taught to them, reviewed it in their homes, discussed it among themselves, and because they were to teach it to their children, the law was as accessible as their own mouth or their neighbor's mouth or the mouth of one of the elders.
 - b. And Moses goes on to say that it is possible to obey the law because God has planted the essence of the law in your heart. Therefore, your heart resonates, or agrees with the truth of the

law as you are faced with figuring out how to apply the law to the daily challenges of life. In other words, without ever hearing the particulars of the law, you have a sufficient sense of right and wrong to affirm the particulars of the law when you hear it – which makes keeping the law very possible.

3. Now, with Moses' use of this quote in mind, it is an easy move to see how Paul is applying it.
 - a. First of all, Paul is saying that faith in, and obedience to Jesus Christ is both accessible and possible. In fact, by implication, Paul is saying that the gospel is as accessible and as possible to obey as was the law under Moses.
 - b. Then, Paul is says that the reason the gospel is accessible is because it is in your mouth. In other words, the apostles, pastors, and teachers are teaching it, the evangelists are proclaiming it, the church is memorizing it, the Christians are repeating it and discussing it in the home and elsewhere, and Christian parents are teaching it to their children.
 - c. And finally, Paul is saying that the reason the gospel message is possible to obey is because it agrees with what God has put in your heart from birth. Most of us are sane enough to have a heartfelt sense of right and wrong – a right and wrong that is, in essence, the same as God's right and wrong. Why? Because God put this sense of right and wrong within us. Therefore, it only makes sense that it is the same as God's spoken standard of righteousness.

- F. Romans 10:10 . . . for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
 1. There isn't time to continue, so we will pick up here next time we gather.
 2. Between now and then, take what has already been said about the mouth and heart in relation to faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ, and begin considering what is so significant about vs 10, and why it may go much deeper than many evangelism methods take it.