

The Christian Manual: Study 13, Romans 10

Romans Studies for Teens by Mike Apodaca, MA



Begin with prayer for wisdom from God and for the presence of the Spirit.

Note: In a Bible Study, as much as possible ask the questions and let the students answer. Where they cannot, you supply the answer and keep everything flowing.

Introduction: Jesus said that the way to salvation was narrow. He said that He was the only way. One of the great tragedies in life is knowing that people we love may refuse to reach God through Christ. I once knew a Christian girl who refused to believe that her unbelieving father could go to hell. She loved him so much that she could not accept God's judgment applied to her dad.

Aching for the Family's Salvation

Section 1: Romans 10:1-4 The Wrong Path

10 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³Since 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.

We have all struggled with deep yearnings for the salvation for those we love, but who will not come to God through Christ. Paul wants so badly to see the Jewish people come to Jesus.

The Jew's problem is not that they were idle, or complacent. They were not lazy or detached. They were zealous, as was Paul when he was one of them (Philippians 3:4-6). But they were zealous and single-minded for the wrong thing. They invested themselves whole-heartedly for a path that led to nowhere, completely ignoring the path that led to God.

What is it a man needs to stand before a holy God? Only one thing will suffice—righteousness. The Jews believed this to be achieved through obeying the Law of God with discipline and effort. They codified the Law until every minute part of life was regimented and they could attain perfection. They got all the external things right. Paul did these external acts so well himself, he says he was blameless (Philippians 3:6).

God wants righteousness that begins on the inside, righteousness that changes a man's nature in his the core and works its way through his entire being, including the external things.

Jesus is the culmination of the Law. He did not come to get rid of it, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). Jesus is the righteousness of God. When we join with Him by faith, sharing in His death and resurrection, we take on His righteousness. He fulfills the Law for us and we fulfill it in Him.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer expressed it like this:

“This righteousness is therefore not a duty owed, but a perfect and truly personal communion with God, and Jesus not only possessed this righteousness, but is himself the personal embodiment of it. He is the righteousness of the disciples. By calling them he has admitted them to partnership with himself, and made them partakers of his righteousness in its fullness.”¹ Tyndale wrote in his introduction to his commentary on Romans, “The sum and whole cause of the writing of this epistle is to prove that a man is justified by faith only.”²

Paul’s Jewish brothers completely missed this, as do those we love who will not give up their plans to get to heaven by their own devices rather than submitting to Christ.

Section 2: Romans 10:5-9 The Futile Way and the Way that Works

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: 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.

This really clarifies things. It’s not that a righteousness can’t be achieved by the Law. If a person could obey ever Law perfectly, they could achieve righteousness before God. However, there is only one person who has done this—Jesus.

“For any who might say, I have lived the Law perfectly, Jesus said the following from Matthew 5:21-22:

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother

¹ *The Cost of Discipleship*, pg. 141

² *In A History of Christian Thought Vol. 3*, by Justo Gonzalez, pg. 171

or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

This was a very loving thing to do. We have a tendency to lower the bar so that we can reach it. We compare ourselves to others and as long as we can find others worse than we are, we think we're okay. Jesus destroys all that. He says plainly, unless you are perfect, as God is perfect, you are worthy of hell. This pretty much shuts off performance of the Law as a viable way to reach righteousness.

In contrast to this is the way of faith. This way is not far away. We don't have to plunge into the depths or soar into the heights to find it. It is right with us now. If we will just confess (admit) with our mouth and believe with our hearts that God has raised Jesus from the dead, we will be saved. Salvation is not impossible, as is fulfilling the Law. Salvation is not far off, that we should have to travel to a mountain top or in a deep cave to find it. Salvation is readily available to all. What is needed from us is faith.

Section 3: Romans 10:10-15 The Way of Faith

¹⁰For 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. ¹¹As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be

put to shame." ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴How, 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? ¹⁵And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Think about how you were saved. Someone proclaimed the good news of Jesus. Someone shared and you received the message. You believed in your heart and proclaimed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. You were saved. What a glorious day when you stepped from darkness to light, from being lost to being found, from being a child of damnation to a child of God. You are saved because God opened salvation to all men and women, Jews and non-Jews.

And now, we are sent, we preach, so that others can hear and believe and also be saved. We carry the good news, the amazing news that God saves everyone who believes. Share it with everyone, all the time.

Section 4: Romans 10:16-21 Israel and Everyone Else

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. 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.”

I can imagine Paul pouring over the Old Testament, praying to God and seeking wisdom from the Spirit to understand why his people, the Jews, were not turning as an entire nation to their Messiah, Jesus. It is not that they had not heard. They had the prophecies. They had John the Baptist and Jesus and the Apostles. God had performed miracles through Jesus and the Apostles. Paul himself had performed many miracles through the power of the Spirit. The Jews knew—and yet they rejected the gospel.

As he scoured the Old Testament, Paul saw that this was not unforeseen. God had prophesied that the Jews would reject Him and the gospel. Verse after verse proclaimed this. This was not accident. It was God’s plan to bring the gentiles into the Kingdom.

And why would the Jews reject such an amazing salvation? Because they are obstinate. This last word is interesting. It means, literally, “against, to speak.” In other words, to say something different than what God is saying. God is proclaiming a way of salvation that involves faith in Jesus. The Jews are speaking against this, proclaiming a very different way to God, a way that involves their own good works and fulfilling the Law on their own works. Although this way does not work, they continue to try to make it work. Although God offers them grace and righteousness and a way to Him through faith, they insist on trying to reach Him on their own efforts. This is why they are not running to God. It is because they reject the way of Christ.

How does Paul know what is going on in the heads of his Jewish brothers? He was one of them. In Acts chapters 7-8 we see Stephen, a man filled with the Spirit who preached a marvelous sermon similar to this chapter, showing from the Old Testament that God

planned all along to bring the Christ, to bring Jesus. And the Jews became so enraged, they stoned him and killed him. Stephen became the first martyr. And when the Jews laid their coats down, it was at the feet of Paul. In the face of the Scriptures and prophecy, in the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit to pierce through the heart with truth, with the proof of the miracles and the changed lives, Paul hardened his heart and approved of Stephen's murder. Not only this, he went on to murder and imprison all he caught following the Way. It took Jesus himself appearing to Paul in a blinding light and getting blinded and having his sight restored by a Christian to finally bring Paul to faith. He knew he did not deserve it. He knew his countrymen did not deserve it. But how he wished that all of them would know their Messiah the way he did.



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Paul loved the Jewish people. They were his people, his family. He loved the rituals, festivals, and wonderful traditions that exalted God. He loved the rich history of his people from the Patriarchs to the Prophets. He loved the Scriptures and studied them diligently.

But the Jewish people had one thing that ruined them. They had created a way to God different than the one He Himself created. They really believed that if they did everything according to their rules and regulations, they would be righteous. Thus they washed their hands in a proper ritual fashion (see Mark 7) and observed all their rules for the Sabbath. They exalted their regulations to a position above the Law and commandments. They thought they had righteousness and could appear spotless before God.

Of course this was an illusion. In John 8 Jesus catches the woman in adultery. His response to these self-righteous Jews who want to stone her is to say that whoever among them is without sin may throw the first stone. Then he squats down and writes something on the ground. As he does, the men drop their rocks and leave. We don't know what he wrote, but whatever it was, it pierced through the false righteousness that the Jews wrapped themselves in. These are the men Jesus would call whitewashed sepulchers— white and clean on the outside, but filled with death.

There are three types of people in this world. There are those who never put any thought to their own salvation. They just pretend to themselves that death will never come to them. They whistle along pretending that they are fine just as they are. After all, we all have to go sometime, right? Secondly, there are the people who have

created their own way to God. It might be by following a religion or philosophy. It might be by following a set of rituals or by meditation or by Altered States of Consciousness. Or they may have convinced themselves that if they are only good enough, God will accept them. So they are trying to clean up their lives and be the kind of religious people God wants them to be. They have earned a place in the kingdom. They deserve it as a reward for their hard work.

The last type is the person who has come to the end of their rope. They recognize that they are sinners and cannot do anything to please God and live up to His righteous demands. They run to faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, taking it as the lifeline it is. They happily surrender all they are and have, accepting crucifixion of their old selves and transferring the ownership of their lives to God in order to know Christ and His salvation. They are filled with the Spirit and now embody Christ.

Everyone belongs to one of these three groups. Which one do you belong to?

CONNECT: Icebreaker

We all have family members who are not saved. Paul is going to talk in this chapter about his family, the Jews, and their rejection of the gospel.

Tonight we are going to write letters to a family member who is not saved. This is not going to be something preachy or condemning. It's going to be a clear explanation of what Christ means to us. You can share how you came to Christ and what He means to you.

This week you will deliver this letter to your family member.





WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Section 1 Romans 10:1-4

The Jews are Paul's people, his family. He aches for them to be saved, even as we ache for those in our family who are not saved. Paul explains that they have missed righteousness because they are trying to create their own when Christ fulfilled the Law and all righteousness.

Section 2 Romans 10:5-9

The way of the Law brings righteousness if the Law is completely observed. But this is so close to impossible that few, if any, other than Christ, have done it. Whereas the possibility of performing the Law is difficult, the way of salvation is not far off. It is right here. All we must do is believe in our heart and confess with our mouth and we will be saved.

Section 3 Romans 10:10-16

Heart faith in Christ is the way all can come to God. But in order to have faith, you have to hear the good news. We must share it.

Section 4 Romans 10:16-21

Paul tries to make sense out of the Jews' unbelief. He sees the hand of God in it. God knew from the beginning that His people would reject Him and the salvation He was offering them. They would choose their own way and reject His. This He did to bring the gentiles into the faith, to open up salvation to all mankind.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Section 1 Read Romans 10:1-4

1. Think of someone in your family who's not saved. Have they heard the gospel? Without naming them, explain why you think they haven't come to faith.
2. Were the Jews rejected because they were not passionate for God? If not, then why?

Section 2 Read Romans 10:5-9

1. What does Paul mean when he says that the salvation that comes through faith is close by? How does one take hold of this righteousness?
2. Where does faith happen? How's it expressed?

Section 3 Read Romans 10:10-15

1. Who does God give salvation to?
2. What's needed for people to have faith? What can we do to help this wonderful process?

Section 4 Read Romans 10:16-21

1. Paul knew that his people, the Jews, were going to reject the gospel. He himself had been one of them. How did that affect his feelings toward them? Did he ever stop trying to reach them for Christ? Think of a family member that does not know Christ. What can you do this week to be faithful and share the gospel with them?



HOW DOES IT APPLY?

Paul cared for his family, just like I care for mine. What did he do to reach the Jewish people?

Firstly, Paul walked in the Spirit. Some have said that we are the only Jesus people will ever see. We need to live worthy of the gospel—to be Christ-like in this world. Non-Christians must see us living a very different life than those of this world.

The difference might look something like this:

In the world teenagers play video games or watch TV in all the empty spaces of their lives. In the Spirit teenagers read their Bibles, meditate on Scripture, pray, and worship in any spare time they get.

In the flesh teenagers are addicted to social media. In the Spirit teens are addicted to God alone. He is the one thing they absolutely cannot be without.

In the flesh, teens are obsessed with sex, pornography, and drama. In the Spirit, teens are obsessed with becoming pure and holy and suitable habitations for God.

As we live a life for God, His Spirit will come and dwell within us. He will fill us with joy and love. He will bring the kingdom to us and to others through us.

Secondly, we are to share this salvation. We have to speak up. We are to explain our joy in all circumstances. We need to explain our hope and different character. We need to explain why our job doesn't drive us crazy. We stay above it all through Jesus.