

ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH
GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY & MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY – Chapters 9-11

LESSON 36 – GOD’S PLAN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – Romans 10:5-15

So far in chapters nine and ten, Paul has been talking directly to the Jews about righteousness before God. In this section of chapter ten, we will see how Paul lays out the plan of righteousness not only for the Jews to understand but for all of us to understand as well. Since all of mankind is unrighteous, we have to get our righteousness from another source and that is Jesus.

God’s Plan of Righteousness Contradicted

Verse 5 is a quote from Leviticus 18:5. In that verse, God said that if a person keeps the Law, they will find life through keeping it. Now...this seems to contradict what Paul has been saying all through Romans up to this point...that righteousness can’t be found by keeping the Law. The reality is that Paul knew no one ever has or ever can keep the entirety of the Law. Not because the Law is bad...but because we are bad. The weakness is not in the Law but in us. The Law demands absolute perfection and no one can measure up to that standard.

James 2:10, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”

Everyone who is honest knows they have broken the Law in at least one area. This was Paul’s point to the Jews in chapter nine. They were looking for righteousness through keeping the Law and not by faith.

God’s Plan of Righteousness Clarified

Paul again quotes from the Old Testament...this time from Deuteronomy 30:12. The point in Deuteronomy was that the commandments of God are not far away from us up in heaven. Paul takes that point about the Law and applies it to Jesus. He is the one who came to us and is waiting to be received by any and all who will receive Him. Finding righteousness in Him is not difficult at all. It is simply a matter of recognizing that God came to earth in the person of the Messiah and believing on Him.

Paul continues on quoting from Deuteronomy 30...this time verse 13. Moses’ reference was to the Law but Paul’s is to Jesus. Just as you don’t have to go to heaven to get the Law, you don’t have to go to the depths of the earth to find Jesus.

While this seems extremely simple for us to understand, it wasn’t that way for the Jews. This is why he goes to such lengths to explain it to them. He then says that righteousness is found by faith.

Paul quotes verse 14 of Deuteronomy 30, “The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart...” There are not hundreds of laws to keep like in the Old Testament nor are there complicated systems for appeasing God or finding “enlightenment” as in other religions. There is a simple word and that word is faith. The number of complicated things people are turning to in our day to find God is amazing. In doing so, they reject the simplicity of the Gospel message.

God's Plan of Righteousness Confessed

What is this word of faith that Paul is talking about here? It is in verse 9. Confessing that Jesus is Lord and believing in His resurrection from the dead. With our mouth we confess and with our heart we believe. That's it...the simplicity of saving faith.

You must believe Jesus is Lord – To believe that Jesus is Lord is to believe He is God. You CAN'T be a Christian if you don't believe that Jesus is God.

You must believe God raised Jesus from the dead – The very foundation of Christianity is not the death of Jesus but His resurrection. Now that doesn't minimize His death or what He did on the cross. Without the cross we could not be saved but without the resurrection, all the benefits of the cross couldn't be applied to our lives. Without the resurrection, there is no eternal life. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, then we won't be raised. Jesus was sacrificed for our sins but He was raised for our justification.

It's interesting to note that Paul reverses the order of "heart" and "mouth" from verse 9 to verse 10. Verse 9 is theology and verse 10 is practical application...the way it happens when a person is saved. A person first believes in their heart and then confesses with their mouth. In Scripture the heart is our mind, emotions and will. When someone believes, every part of them is involved.

What about confession? Well think of it like this... Belief is for the receiving of righteousness and confession is for demonstrating that we've received it. There is no such thing as a secret Christian. The Bible says if you are truly saved, you will confess Jesus with your mouth. Think of other areas of our lives. The things we really believe we can't keep from talking about and the same is true if you believe in Jesus.

God's Plan of Righteousness Characterized

Paul's point in verses 12 and 13 is that the Gospel is as close as the belief in your heart and the confession in your mouth. The Gospel is for everyone. There is not a Gentile Gospel or a Jewish Gospel. It isn't a Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Catholic or Presbyterian Gospel. It is simply the Gospel of Jesus for anyone and everyone who will believe.

This statement is important here in Paul's letter to the Romans because the Gospel was just getting clarified. Some thought there really was a different Gospel for the Jews but Paul says the same Gospel is for everyone regardless of who they are.

The Gospel is a simple message and all people need to know that they can find righteousness by believing in their heart that Jesus is Lord and confessing it to others. This confession is how the Gospel is spread around the world...well at least it should be. Those are the kinds of witnesses Jesus intended for us to be.

Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Paul is saying, "Trust Him and you will not be disappointed. You won't be ashamed...you'll be blessed and you'll be saved." That is the promise of the Gospel for any person on earth who will accept it.

God's Righteousness Communicated

To end this lesson, we will look at how the Gospel is communicated. Paul asks four questions in what is probably one of the greatest missionary passages in the Bible.

1. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?
2. How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?
3. How can they hear without someone preaching to them?
4. How can anyone preach unless they are sent?

That's how the Gospel works its way through the human race and people everywhere are saved. The reality is that when it comes to the message of salvation, we are all preachers.

My prayer is that you and I will be Gospel preachers wherever we go. That we will be those who bring the good news of Jesus to those who need to be saved.