

Romans 10:5-13

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 March 2024

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] Good morning, I invite you to open up your Bibles to Hebrews. Excuse me, we're not in the book of Hebrews. We're in the book of Romans, chapter 10. We spent a little time in Hebrews earlier today.

Romans, chapter 10. Our text for today is Romans, chapter 10, verses 5 through 13. Before we get into our text, I want to tell you that I am very tired.

Physically tired. We have had a lot going on here in the life of the church. Most of you know I'm in the process of building a house. Yesterday I was here, down in my study, working on this sermon today.

And I'm not sure that he knew it, but some people were here cleaning, and Coulson came down and knocked on my door to ask me some questions about chairs, and I had passed out, and not even thought about passing out.

I don't know if he sensed that I felt awkward when he knocked on the door. And I said, come in. I was very startled awake. So I'm finding myself sitting and just fading into unconsciousness all of a sudden.

[1:07] So physically very tired. But more than that, I'm just finding myself lately spiritually tired. I am tired of unimportant theological debates.

There is so much going on out there and sometimes even in here. I'm tired of people confusing gospel implications with the gospel itself.

I'm tired of strained relationships and family conflict. I'm tired of misplaced trust in political parties.

I'm tired of denominational fights and denominational infighting.

I'm tired of people who profess Christ ignoring the word of Christ. Seems often you can't even have a conversation with people who say they're people of the word.

I'm tired of nitpicky preferences and grumbling. I'm tired of mission drift. I'm tired of mental illness and faith deconstruction and lack of assurance.

[2:13] And in all this exhaustion, I am tempted to lose hope. Feel this tug to just lose hope as we live in the time between what will be fully realized in Christ.

The days feel really long. So I'm tempted to lose hope or rather, I may say, to forget the hope that is mine.

And the hope that is the hope of the world. Beloved, we ought never to grow tired of hearing the gospel. For it is the greatest of news for a dimly rebellious humanity.

It must be believed, cherished, defended, and shared. You and I need to be reminded of the good news of Jesus Christ.

I need to hear it all the time. The following is a quotation that I shared with you on the very first week that we picked up our study of the book of Romans.

[3:22] Martin Luther said this of the letter. This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day as the daily bread of the soul.

We can never read it or ponder over it too much. For the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

And so we have before us this morning another opportunity to revel in the good news of Jesus Christ. This text is straightforward and I expect my comments this morning to be brief.

Often I struggle to condense my notes for our planned time together. Today, that is not the case. However, short and simple our consideration of this text is today, let us not miss the profundity of God's mercy expressed to a people in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

So I'll begin reading in verse 5 of chapter 10. Before I read, let me remind you, beloved, that this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and for our good.

[4 : 44] And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands. Paul writes, But what does it say?

The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says, Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The four at the beginning of verse 5 tells us that Paul is further explaining what he has previously stated. Last week we saw Paul juxtapose righteousness pursued by the law and righteousness that is by faith.

[6 : 17] And in verse 4 of chapter 10, Paul says, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

That is, Christ puts away any idea that we might pursue the law for righteousness. So in today's text, he's going to help his hearers understand exactly what he means in verse 4.

And he's going to appeal to the writing of Moses to do so. He goes to the scripture to make his point. So look at verse 5. That is, if you desire to live a life that is pleasing to God, to be called righteous, that is to be perfect, and you pursue this righteousness by the law, then you will have to conduct yourself entirely by the law.

Your very life will depend on it. Paul here is citing Leviticus 18 and verse 5, where Moses records the words of God.

Hear them. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules. If a person does them, he shall live by them. I am the Lord. And so let me just say it more plainly.

[7 : 45] If the basis of your perfection is your perfection, then you will have to be perfect. Before we proceed any further, I think at this point it may serve someone here to consider why anyone would even desire to pursue righteousness.

Gospel responses must start with an understanding of our sinfulness. That we are in fact wicked and rebellious and deserve God's wrath.

Romans chapter 1. Paul has laid this case out for us extensively. Let me just read to you a couple of verses. First, verse 18.

There he says, The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

So their non-perfection, their wickedness, right? The wrath of God is what is due that kind of living.

[8 : 54] You should want to flee from unrighteousness and toward righteousness to avoid the just wrath of God. This is a thing to tremble before.

That the creator of all things would say of you, You deserve wrath. God's wrath is white hot.

And we have purchased it with our sin. Someone may say, though, I am not sure there even is such a God. Well, Paul goes on in verse 19 of the same chapter.

For what could be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Paul argues, chapter 1, verse 19, Oh no, you do know that there is a God, and that His wrath awaits you. Verse 20, For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, and the things that have been made.

[10 : 06] So it can be seen there is a creator, God. And then Paul finishes verse 20 by saying, So they are without excuse.

So we will all one day stand before God in judgment. And the basis of that judgment will be righteousness.

You will either be found perfect on that day and avoid the wrath of God, or found imperfect, and the wrath of God will bear on you forever.

And if you need some further evidence, Paul goes on into chapter 2 to say that our conscience bears witness that there is a God because we have God's law on our hearts.

That you have ever recognized that anything is right or that anything is wrong is because God made you and He wrote that law on your hearts.

[11 : 05] That's verse 15 of chapter 2. There's evidence even within our own thinking, our own moral compass, that this God does in fact exist.

And we know that we have all done things that are wrong. Righteousness should be of great concern to everyone.

Trying to understand and sort out the right and the wrong of the world should concern us. And how we are to be found right matters greatly.

And it matters greatly that you know that you cannot achieve righteousness on your own. It grieves me how many Christian traditions, at least claim to be Christian, and mess this up, want to add to God's grace, works for justification.

If you look out there, it's all over the place. It's rampant. Rob Ventura, the author of a great commentary on the book of Romans, said this, This attempting to be made right with God by our own strivings is a tyranny of the highest order and tragic for the one who does not comply.

[12 : 31] It reigns over us and it is tragic. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans that righteousness is achieved through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

I've said to you, this is the theme of the book, that we're justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And Paul is working out the great implications of that all the way through the end of chapter 11.

And then he tells us how we should live in light of this wonderful truth. Proceeding the verses that I just read to you in Romans chapter 1, this is verse 16 and 17, the thesis statement of the letter.

He says, Therefore I am not ashamed of the gospel. And I just like to insert the positive of that. For I am proud of the gospel. For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.

[13 : 45] Paul is continually unpacking what he has said in verse 16 and 17 of chapter 1. We see him here again doing that very thing.

You have to ask the question, why? Why is Paul going through such labor to do it? And it's because it's so important for us to understand. Justification by faith, through faith alone.

This is exactly what Paul is teaching here in verses 6-8 as he further employs the writing of Moses. Here Paul is citing Deuteronomy chapter 30 verse 11-14 with the introductory phrase there at the beginning of verse 6, but the righteousness based on faith says.

So the righteousness based on works, this pursuit of works says you must be perfect and you must be perfect by your own doing.

But the righteousness based on faith says, and here citing Deuteronomy 30 verse 11-14, for this commandment that I command you today, that is, to keep the law, is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

[15 : 03] It is not in heaven that you should say, who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, who will go over the sea or into the abyss for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it.

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it. If you are looking at chapter 10 verses 6-8 and listening astutely as I read from Deuteronomy, you have surely noticed that Paul's inspired parenthetical insertions.

You see them there? The Deuteronomy text in a simple reading seems to be saying that God's law can be easily kept by one's own volition. But Paul helps us to see its connection to Christ, the unfolding reality of the gospel.

There he says, but the righteousness based on faith says, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven and here's the inspired insertion, 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.

[16 : 22] That is the word of faith or the gospel that we proclaim. Now the law was always meant to be kept by faith.

This has not changed Old to New Testament. It could have never been kept perfectly. It was meant to press those who tried to keep it toward faith.

They had to believe that they were in pursuing righteousness, somehow God would save them.

They knew they couldn't keep it perfectly, but yet promises somehow are being kept as we work to

do this thing.

But now because of the progressive revelation, we understand how it is that it's kept. We now have Christ and He is not far off.

That is the point that Paul is driving at here. This confession of righteousness based on faith is in a Christ who is near.

[17:27] He is near. Paul arcs us through all that he has taught so far and he brings us to the simple profundity of verses 9 and 10.

There he says, because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Sincerity of belief at the very core of your being.

Believing something is true and then living in light of that truth and confession with your mouth the initial evidence of your belief that Jesus is God.

He is who He said He is. He is who God the Father said He is. And that His resurrection is factual and it validates His completed work is the work of faith.

[18:40] Believing in your heart, confessing with your mouth is the work of faith and the means and the only means through which God saves sinners.

And this is not meant to be formulaic. Paul is not laying out a rubric for us that we must go through in order to be saved. It is just rather an explanation of faith.

Believing in your heart, grasping hold of the reality of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished and evidencing that that's true.

confessing with your mouth that He is in fact who He said He is. It's an explanation of faith. And it's not a lifelong labor.

It sets us on a course where we must now earn God's favor. It's a liberating hope. It sets us free from the law for righteousness.

[19:43] We're still given the moral law as a guide for us that we might grow in holiness, but it is not for our standing before God. When we become Christians, we're changed in kind.

We're those who will stand before Him in judgment and He will say of us, well done, my good and faithful servant, because we're clothed in the righteousness of Christ. You've heard me talk at length about double imputation and I think it's so important.

That's why I say it so often. That is to say, believing in the gospel doesn't just forgive us our sin, which is so incredibly important. We need our record expunged if we're not going to bear God's wrath forever.

But not only that, we need the perfection that the law requires. And so we're granted that also in Christ, the double trade, right?

Christ taking away our sin and giving to us his righteousness. We need both things. And if we only think that Christ died to expunge my sin, we often think that he expunged my sin past.

[20:54] And now it's up to me to live righteously, prove that I was worth it, right? Some kind of debtor's ethic kicks into our minds. And in fact, he's also granted us his righteousness.

We are declared perfect already. And this becomes the impetus for, the power for, the foundation for righteous living, right?

I now pursue righteousness by the power of the Spirit of grateful heart. I want to live a life that honors my God because he has declared me righteous.

Charles Spurgeon said this of this text, how very simple. No climbing, no diving, no imagining, no long reckoning of the understanding, no strangling of the mental faculties.

It is just believe God's testimony concerning his Son and thou shalt be saved. You need not be brilliant to come to Christ.

[22:03] Christ. You need only to recognize your transgression and your need of a Savior and then to believe that Jesus is that Savior.

We are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. I will read to you a poem.

I believe the last time I read this poem, I didn't know who to attribute it to. I now know who to attribute it to. It is called The Stairs and it is by Theodosia Pickering Garrison.

It was written in 1907. If this comes up familiar to you, now we know who actually wrote this poem. She wrote this. Oh, long and dark, the stairs I trod, with stumbling feet to find my God, gaining a

foothold bit by bit, then slipping back and losing it.

There came a certain time when I loosened my hold and fell thereby, down to the lowest step my fall as if I had not climbed at all.

[23 : 16] And as I lay, despairing there, there came a footfall on the stairs, and lo, when hope had ceased to be, my God, this poem of one who had labored to find themselves approved before God by their own effort and failed and failed and failed and came to a point of absolute despair.

I have nothing, I can do nothing, which is a prerequisite that we might be saved, that we would be humble. I can add nothing to the equation of my salvation and God becomes a man, comes into a world, perfectly keeps the law on our behalf, dies the death that we deserved, doesn't stay dead but is resurrected three days later, proving that he is in fact the Christ.

He is now ascended, seated at the right hand of God. He intercedes for his people and he reigns from that place. one day he will be told to get up and come back for his people.

If we are alive in that day, we will join him in the air, he will judge all the peoples and he will make all things new. And it's because of that that we have hope in tired days.

On the final day when we stand before God in judgment, Paul tells us in verse 11, for the scripture says, and here he is quoting Isaiah 28 and verse 16, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

[24 : 57] He goes on to tell us the extent of the offer of the gospel which we'll look at further next week. He has stated precisely in his letter that all, whether Jew or Greek, are saved by graceful and through faithful, alone, and the completed person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

He said this before, but it bears repeating, especially as he unfolds God's purpose for Jews and Gentiles in chapters 9 through 11.

Whether Jew or Greek, there is no distinction, verse 12 tells us, for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him, that we would be saved, right, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord.

And that is to say, the name of the Lord represents all that he is, cries out to him, his person and his work will be saved.

God and so today, if you have yet to call on the name of the Lord, do so. I feel like the application is much more complicated than that.

[26 : 14] There is a way to be saved, and it is by grace through faith in Christ. Do not labor to save yourself, which will end in your demise, but throw yourself on the mercy of God.

Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. If you have called on the name of the Lord, do not lose hope.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation, and we should be proud of it. We should believe it, we should cherish it, we should defend it, and we should share it.

For everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. I'm so very glad that we have this letter that Paul wrote under inspiration to the Roman believers here in front of us for our benefit today.