

Introduction (Rom 10:1-21)

A few weeks ago, Chad and I met a pastor in Rome, and I shared with him a little bit of my life and background. I told him that I used to live in Acworth, pastored a church, and was a chaplain at the Cobb County Adult Detention Center. After hearing my story, he shared his testimony with me. He had been a professional musician, and apparently a good one. However, he was a heavy user of cocaine, and ended up being incarcerated at Cobb County Adult Detention Center, where I had served as a chaplain. While he was there the Lord spoke very clearly to him, and he committed his life to the Lord. Now, eighteen years later, he has an insulation company and pastors a church. He is using his musical gift to lead people in worship. Even though he was incarcerated at Cobb County three years after I had left, it was very encouraging to me to hear his story. I had been a very integral part of the move of God that took place at that prison. I thank God for the opportunity to have served there, and for the lives that have been changed. My preaching, teaching, evangelizing, counseling, and serving is not in vain.

In Romans 10:1-5, we saw that the Jews' religion was in vain. They had a zeal for God, but not in accordance with the knowledge of God. They tried to establish their own righteousness, rather than subjecting themselves to the righteousness of God. Christ came to fulfill the Law, and He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. If you try to establish your own righteousness by keeping the Law, you have to live perfectly by that Law. Unfortunately, we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We can never attain the righteousness of God on our own. Because the Jews had tried to do it on their own; it was vain religion.

(Rom 10:1-5) "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."

Romans 10:1-5 is actually part of the overall message in Romans 10 about the gospel. Paul opened up with the righteousness based on law that the Jews were trying to establish, and now contrasts that with the righteousness that comes by faith, which is one of three truths about the gospel that we will look at today. The second truth is that salvation is available for whosoever. There are two conditions for whosoever; one must believe in his heart and confess with his mouth. The third truth is that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

Three Truths About the Gospel Message

1. Righteousness of God comes by faith (Rom 10:1-10) (What is required? Faith!)
2. Salvation is for whosoever (Rom 10:11-13) (Who can be saved? Whoever!)
3. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom 10:14-21) (How? Hearing and believing)

1. **Righteousness of God comes by faith.** (Rom 10:6-10) (What is required? Faith!)

Paul has just explained that the Jews had sought to establish their own righteousness and had not subjected themselves to the righteousness of God. If you are going to depend on the Law, you must practice it in entirety; you must be sinless. Unfortunately, all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So, the righteousness based on the Law is in vain. Paul now contrasts this with the righteousness that comes by faith. He answers the question, "What is required to obtain the righteousness of God?" It is not by the law of righteousness but by faith.

Paul starts out by quoting from Deuteronomy 30:11-14. He said, “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), 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’ – that is the word of faith which we are preaching.” I read a lot of commentaries to learn as much as I could from theologians and scholars. I did not really get a good grasp on what Paul was saying until I went back and studied Deuteronomy 30.

(Rom 10:6-8) “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,”

Moses wrote, “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.” He was saying that you don’t have to ascend to heaven to understand it, and you don’t have to descend into the abyss to understand; it is right here in front of you and easy to grasp. I believe the main point that Paul is making is that the gospel message is not too difficult or complicated; it is simple. It is not out of reach; it is at hand. I believe that Moses was also being prophetic about what the Messiah was going to do. Jesus was going to die, be buried and descend to the Hades (Sheol), the place of the dead, and ascend into heaven. I believe God gave Paul the revelation of this prophecy that Moses had recorded. But, the main point is that the gospel message is easy to grasp, and not out of reach for anyone.

(Deut 30:11) “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.”

A few weeks ago someone shared a story with Karen and I about a young boy who wanted to get baptized. The young boy believes in Jesus and wants to become a Christian. However, the pastor at their church, said that he was not ready. The whole point of this quote in Deuteronomy is that it is not difficult to understand and not out of reach, even for a seven-year old boy. In Matthew 19:13-15, some children were brought to Jesus so that He might lay His hands on them and pray. They were probably being brought to Jesus to be blessed by Him. The disciples, similar to this pastor, stopped the children. But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” It is not a difficult message to understand, and children can grasp it. We should not hinder children from coming to Christ, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

(Matt 19:13-15) “Then *some* children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. {14} But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." {15} After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.”

In Luke 17:20-21, Jesus gave the Pharisees the same message about the kingdom of God being at hand. They had asked about when the kingdom of God was coming. Jesus responded, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.” It is not out of reach; it is right in front of you. It is not something difficult to grasp or understand; it is a simple message.

(Luke 17:20-21) “Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; {21} nor will they say, ‘Look, here *it is!*’ or, ‘There *it is!*’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, Paul wrote about the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. He said if one comes and preaches another Jesus or if they receive a different spirit, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. The gospel message is simple and pure. It is not difficult to grasp, and it is not out of reach. Sometimes, we make the gospel message complicated, but it is a simple message that anyone can share. In 1992, the Lord directed us to leave a club job and go back on the PGA Tour. In preparation for that, I did evangelism training with our seven children. We taught them how to share their testimony with people, and also how to present the bridge illustration. We did role playing and practiced on each other. The children did great and once we were back on the tour, God used them significantly. The gospel message is not out of reach to understand, and it is also not out of reach for everyone to be able to share with others. Consider, the Samaritan woman at the well. She did not have any seminary or evangelism training, and yet she brought many people to the Lord in her town. She simply invited them to meet the Messiah. It is a simple message that all of us can share with others.

(2 Cor 11:3-4) “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ. {4} For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully.”

Paul goes on to say, “But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.” The gospel message is not out of reach, and it is not something hard or impossible; it is very near and accessible and understandable. The word is in our mouth and in our heart, so that we may observe it. What is required to obtain this righteousness of God? There are two elements to this word of faith. First, we must believe it in our hearts. Second, we must confess it with our mouths.

(Deut 30:14) “But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.”

Paul expounds on this in verses nine and ten, saying, “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; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” The righteousness of God that comes by faith must be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth. When I share the gospel message, I don’t share a book on theology; it is a simple message. I ask the question, do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He came and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead. If the answer is yes, then I go to the second question, “The Bible says that we must believe in our heart and confess Jesus as Lord. Would you like to receive Jesus into your life right now by confessing Him as your Lord?” If the answer to both of these is yes, then I lead the person in the “Sinner’s Prayer.”

(Rom 10:9-10) “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.”

2. **Salvation is Available for Whosoever.** (Rom 10:11-13) (Who can be saved?)

The first question is about what is required for salvation, and the answer is that we receive God's righteousness by faith. We must believe in our heart and confess with our mouth. The second question is, "Who can be saved?" Many scholars use Romans 9 to teach that God picks who He will save, and the rest of the people were created to be vessels of wrath, only to be judged and sent to hell. We saw numerous verses that tell us that God does not want any to perish but for all to repent and be saved. In verses eleven through thirteen, Paul makes this very clear. Whoever believes and whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The answer is whoever.

(Rom 10:11-13) "For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 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."

Many of God's promises are conditional, meaning that there are certain conditions that must be met in order for that promise to be enacted. For example, if we trust in the Lord with all of our heart, and do not lean on our own understanding, and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will make our paths straight. That is a promise from God. He does not make everyone's path straight. He promises to make everyone's path straight that 1) trusts in Him, 2) does not lean on his own understanding, and 3) acknowledges God in all his ways. The promise is for anyone and everyone, but there are three conditions that must be met.

(Pr 3:5-6) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. {6} In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

In this promise of God, salvation is available to everyone. There is no partiality or discrimination. God has not pre-selected those who this promise applies to. It is available to all, but there are two conditions that must be met for those that want to receive this promise. First, they must believe, and second, they must call upon or confess Him as Lord.

While the lineage of Christ could only come through one seed, which was God's choice, His mercy is available to all. God does not discriminate. His salvation is available to Jews and Greeks. Jesus is the same Lord of all, and He is abounding in riches for all who will call on Him. The word whoever is used twice and the word, all, is used twice. Both of these words tell us who can be saved. Jesus is Lord of all and His grace is available for all. Jesus' mercy and forgiveness are available for whoever will believe and call upon Him.

3. **Faith comes by hearing the word of God.** (Rom 10:14-17) How will they be saved?

The third truth that Paul shares about the gospel is that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Paul talks about the process of how people will be saved. After saying that all who call upon Him will be saved, he asks the question, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" Before we can confess Jesus as Lord, we must believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead. When you share the gospel with people, we should ask them if they believe in Jesus, as this is a requirement.

(Rom 10:14) "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?"

The next question Paul asks is, “And how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? That is a great question. There are lots of people around the world that have never heard the gospel. People need to hear the gospel message. Paul wrote that he was not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. The gospel message is powerful, and people need to hear the message.

(Rom 1:16) “For I am not ashamed 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.”

The next question that Paul asks is, “How will they hear without a preacher?” God wants people to hear the gospel message; it is part of how people get saved. They need to hear the gospel. Statistically, most people in the church today have not shared the gospel with anyone. Research shows that ninety percent (90%) of Christians have never led someone else to the Lord. Most people feel inadequate and do not feel prepared or trained. Most people are frightened at the thought of sharing the gospel. Some are afraid of losing a friendship or alienating people. Most people do not feel that they have been specifically called to evangelize. They feel their gift is serving, teaching, or something other than evangelizing. They are content to let the “evangelists” preach the gospel. The problem is that those with the gift of evangelism only meet a few people in the world. God wants the world to hear the gospel message. God commanded all of us to share the gospel and to be His representatives, not just a few. Churches are often hesitant to put evangelists on their pastoral staff. We are guilty of letting the teachers teach every week. God said that He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers so that the church could be equipped. The church needs equipping in evangelism, and we need to invite the evangelists into equipping roles in the church. “How can people believe in Him who they have not heard?”

(Eph 4:11-12) “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”

Paul’s next question is, “How will they preach unless they are sent?” Many Christians do not think that they have been sent to preach the gospel to people; they think others have been given that gifting, calling, and responsibility, but it does not apply to them. We think of “being sent” as in a missionary being sent out to another country. We don’t have this sense that God has sent each one of us to preach the gospel to the people in our lives. He has sent each of us to preach the gospel to our families, neighbors, and co-workers. We have all been sent.

(Rom 10:15) “How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”

In Mark 16:15, before going to be with the Father, Jesus met with His disciples and commanded them to go preach the gospel, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

(Mark 16:15-16) “And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. {16} He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

Some people might think that this command was only for His apostles and the disciples He was with. However, in Acts 1:8, Jesus told all of us to be His witnesses. He said we will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon us, and we shall be His witnesses. I don't think the Holy Spirit is only poured out for the evangelists. Every believer is given the Holy Spirit, and one of the many reasons that He gave us His Spirit is to be His witnesses.

(Acts 1:8) "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

In 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, Jesus gave us the ministry of reconciliation, which is to reconcile people to God. He made us His ambassadors or representatives on earth. The church has a job to do. We must tell people about Jesus. How will they believe in Jesus if they have never heard of Him? You have all been sent to proclaim the gospel.

(2 Cor 5:19-20) "namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. {20} Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Some people get discouraged because they shared the gospel with someone and they rejected it. I have shared the gospel with a lot of people that have rejected it. Paul addresses that, saying, "However, they did not all heed the good news." There are going to be people who hear the gospel message but do not believe. That does not mean that we stop sharing the gospel. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ, so we must keep sharing the gospel.

(Rom 10:16-17) "However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" {17} So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Paul specifically addresses his fellow Jews in verses eighteen through twenty-one. For the Jews, it was not a matter of not having heard the gospel. Paul says, "Indeed they have." The Jews had heard the gospel message but had not believed it. Paul quotes Psalm 19:4, which states that their utterances have gone to the end of the world. In context, this is speaking of how the whole creation speaks of the glory of God. Day to day and night to night, God's creation is pouring forth speech and revealing knowledge.

(Rom 10:18) "But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

(Ps 19:1-4) "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. {2} Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. {3} There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. {4} Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun,"

Paul said in Romans 1 that the world is without excuse because His invisible attributes have been made known. The Jews had heard, yet they had not believed.

(Rom 1:20) “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

God loves the Jewish people. Even though they had heard and were without excuse, God was going to use the Gentiles to make them jealous. He allowed the Gentiles, who did not seek Him, find Him. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21, where Moses prophesied that God would make them jealous with those who are not a people, a foolish nation.

(Rom 10:18-19) “But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU."

(Deut 32:21) “They have made Me jealous with *what* is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with *those who* are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,”

Paul then quotes Isaiah 65:1-2, where the prophet says that those who did not ask for the Lord found God. He let those who were not a nation find Him. Notice God’s persistence to reach the Jewish people. “I have spread out My hand all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts.” God loves the Jewish people and has continually spread out His hands and reached out to them, and yet, they keep rebelling. So, God chose to use Gentiles to make them jealous for Him.

(Rom 10:20-21) “And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME." {21} But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."

(Is 65:1-2) “I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask *for Me*; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name. {2} "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk *in* the way which is not good, following their own thoughts,”

Paul opened up Romans 9 by saying that the adoption as sons belonged to the Israelites. God loves them and keeps reaching out to them. He is still reaching out to them, and He is using those of us who are Gentiles to make them jealous. This passage is dealing with how God is reaching out to the Jews, but in Romans 1 we saw that He is revealing Himself to all creation. God does not want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance and be saved.

(Rom 9:4) “who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,”

Conclusion and Applications

The gospel message is a simple message. It is not difficult and out in the heavens; it is right in front of us. Salvation is not something that we earn by trying to establish our own righteousness. We attain the righteousness of God by placing our faith in God. The Jews tried to establish their own, and did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

The gospel message is available to whoever. God does not single out any person or group of people; He made it available to whosoever. People need to hear the gospel so that they can believe. The gospel message requires a response. Whosoever believes and calls out to God will not be disappointed; they will be saved. So, there is a response that is required.

The gospel message must be heard for people to believe. God has sent all of us to preach the gospel. Even though God has made us ambassadors and representatives, most people today do not see it as their responsibility; they see that it belongs to others. However, God has poured out His Spirit and empowered all of us to be His witnesses. I want to end with God's encouragement to all of us. He said, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" If you want a beautiful church, it is not found in a million-dollar facility; it is found in a group of people that are committed to bringing the gospel message to the people around them.

(Rom 10:15) "How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

- Does the gospel message seem simple to you?
- Does the gospel message seem out of reach, or is it easy to understand?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing your testimony with others?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing the gospel message?
- What are some things that would help you become more confident about sharing the gospel with others?
- What is the one thing that keeps you from sharing with more people?

Introduction (Rom 10:1-21)

1. **Righteousness of God comes by faith.** (Rom 10:1-10, Deut 30:11, Matt 19:13-15, Luke 17:20-21, 2 Cor 11:3-4, Deut 30:14)
2. **Salvation is for whosoever.** (Rom 10:11-13)
3. **Faith comes by hearing the word of God.** (Rom 10:14-21, Rom 1:16, Eph 4:11-12, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, 2 Cor 5:19-20, Ps 19:1-4, Rom 1:20, Deut 32:21, Is 65:1-2, Rom 9:4)

Conclusion and Applications (Rom 10:15)