

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational: 9:1-11:36** (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

After explaining God’s sovereign working in bringing us to faith in Christ and the security the believer now has in Christ, Paul then focuses on Israel. We as believers have special promises that emphasize our security, but didn’t Israel also have wonderful promises? What about Israel? And how does the reality of the Church today interact with God’s program for Israel?

These are the kinds of things Paul is dealing with in Romans 9-11. Paul in Romans 9 first emphasizes the sovereignty of God and how He works through “the purpose of election” (Rom. 9:11). But then at the end of the chapter he also emphasizes that Israel’s problem was their lack of FAITH!

Slide # 2

The fact is, the Word of God teaches both God’s elective sovereignty and man’s responsibility, though it does not show us how to reconcile this paradox. ... Romans 9 teaches divine election – chapter 10 teaches human responsibility. I emphasize this because it is possible to get just enough of the vertical theology of Romans 9 to make us horizontally irresponsible. ... If you are without Christ, is it not because you are non-elect, but because you are rejecting Christ. You cannot place the blame on anyone else. At least five times in this chapter [Romans 10] (vv. 8, 11, 12, 16, and 21) the responsibility of the Jews is implicitly emphasized. – **R. Kent Hughes**

The problem with unsaved Jews is not that they were non-elect, the problem was their lack of faith. The onus is put squarely on the shoulders of human responsibility.

Slide # 3

The Emphases of Romans 9...

- Romans 9:1-29
 - 1) Sovereignty
 - 2) Election
 - 3) Remnant

Emphasis: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY!

- Romans 9:30-33
 - 4) Faith

Emphasis: HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY!

The groundwork for chapter 10 is laid in Roman 9:30-33 that we looked at last week. The emphasis here is on righteousness, on what basis one is made right with God.

Slide # 4

RIGHTEOUSNESS

- the righteousness of faith (Rom. 9:30)
- by the works of the law (Rom. 9:32)

What Paul is emphasizing is that the Jews in general did not attain to a righteous standard before God because they sought it by works and not by faith. And now Paul builds on this reality of human responsibility in chapter 10. The chapter division between Romans 9 and Romans 10 does not denote a break in thought.

Romans 10:1–5 (NKJV)

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

The idea of "desire" here is the sentiment of warm affection. It literally means "good pleasure". He is not bitter toward them, but wants only the spiritual best for them. Here he expresses deep pathos for his fellow Jews.

Paul is deeply concerned about his own people the Jews and expresses that at the beginning of chapter as seen in Romans 9, 10, and 11 (cf. 9:1-3; 10:1; 11:1).

The word prayer is a specific word that emphasizes a special request. Paul is praying for specifically for the Jews that they may be saved.

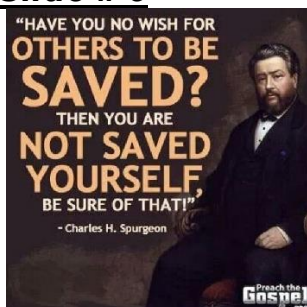
Note Paul did not have the attitude, “**Well, all the elect will be saved so I don’t even need to pray.**” No, Paul prayed for them! In spite of the doctrine of election taught so strongly in Romans 9, Paul was still praying for their salvation. This truth did not diminish his fervent prayer for them; it did not diminish his desire for their salvation; it did not diminish his evangelistic efforts of taking the gospel first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16).

There was no mindset of “fatalistic determination” of “what will be will be and therefore it makes no difference what we do”. No, Paul prayed! He knew God works through prayer. Paul knew God is sovereign and he knew Israel needs saving, and so he prayed for their salvation.

Again, we have the mystery of how divine sovereignty and human responsibility harmonize, but one thing is for sure Paul after strongly emphasizing God’s sovereignty in Romans 9 absolutely hammers the importance of human responsibility here in Romans 10, including the importance of prayer! It all starts with prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

If you really care about the lost you will pray for them – you will pray for their salvation.

Slide # 5



2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

When Paul bears witness he is saying that he can testify to this reality. The Jews did have a tremendous zeal for God.

Zeal here is the same word used of Christ in John 2:17 when He cleansed the temple and the disciples remembered that it was written in Psalm 69:9, “**Zeal for Your house has eaten me up.**” Zeal is the idea of passionate fire. The Jews were called “**the God-intoxicated people**”. They were known for being obsessed with God. They had a passion for God as Paul here testifies.

Paul is exhibit “A” here. He was so passionate for the God of Judaism that he was willing to kill or do whatever was necessary to protect the faith as he understood it to be.

Slide # 6

Acts 22:3–4 (NKJV)

3 “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was **zealous toward God** as you all are today.

4 I **persecuted this Way to the death**, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,

Paul was always on fire for God! Just one problem – it was a misguided zeal (cf. Jn. 16:2; Acts 21:20; 22:3; 26:9-11; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6). This shows that one can be very sincere and yet be sincerely WRONG! It doesn’t matter how sincere you are about God, if you are WRONG about God you are sincerely mistaken! That was the Jewish problem and it is a problem with sincerely religious people all over the world!

It was New Year’s Day 1929. The University of California at Berkeley was playing Georgia Tech in college football’s Rose Bowl. Roy Riegels, a California defender, recovered a Georgia Tech fumble, then turned and scampered 65 yards in the wrong direction! One of Riegels’ own teammates tackled him just before he reached the wrong goal line. On the next play, Georgia Tech scored and went on to win. From that day on, Riegels was saddled with the nickname “Wrong-way Riegels.” (**Source – Our Daily Bread**)

This illustrates misguided zeal! Zeal not according to knowledge is like a football player getting the ball and running with all his might in the wrong direction. It is our job as those who know the truth to tackle them before they score badly for all eternity.

You see Riegels had good intentions – the Jews had good intentions, but they lacked knowledge!

They say “the road to hell is paved with good intentions” and it certainly can be if one has zeal without knowledge. It doesn’t matter how zealous you are, how on fire you are, how passionate you are, how sincere you are, how well intended, if you are ignorant of how to be made right with God it all counts for nothing!

Slide # 7

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And **all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags**; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

The Jews had zeal, but it was zeal not informed according to knowledge. The Jew was thus “wrong-headed” in his religion. He didn’t think right. He didn’t understand properly.

Note Paul often uses the word “knowledge” in relation to the gospel. In order to be saved one must “come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). For Paul “the knowledge of the truth” is code for knowing gospel truth.

Slide # 8

A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

God desires all people to “***be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth***” (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25).

- 1) The KNOWLEDGE of Sin (Rom. 3:19-20).**
- 2) The KNOWLEDGE of Christ as LORD (2 Cor. 4:3-6).**
- 3) The KNOWLEDGE of Christ as SAVIOR (1 Tim. 2:4-6).**
- 4) The KNOWLEDGE of righteousness by BELIEVING (Rom. 10:1-4).**
- 5) ACCOUNTABILITY for the knowledge of the truth (Heb. 10:26-27).**

Slide # 9

Hebrews 10:26–27 (NKJV)

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

There is a special accountability that comes with the knowledge of the truth!

But the point here in Romans 10:2 is that the Jews while being full of zeal for God did not have the knowledge of God's truth. And in particular what they missed was that God's way of being righteous is by faith. And not only that it is by faith in Jesus! So the Jews did not understand WHO Jesus truly was and they did not understand it was all about FAITH in Him.

They were religious, they were full of zeal, they knew the Bible, they knew about God deeply, and yet they missed it.

Slide # 10

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Just because it seems right to someone does not mean it is right. You can kiss your feelings "good bye" because they often are the way of death no matter how good you feel about it. The whole issue is this: Does it line up with God's truth? Is it right according to Scripture? Do you have knowledge according to God's revealed truth? Zeal that is not informed by God's truth is totally misguided and deadly wrong!

You say, "Well, I think sincerity itself counts for something!" Think again! That is dead wrong! What matters before God is gospel truth and being aligned with it from the heart! No matter how far you go down the wrong road you are still on the wrong road and still headed for the wrong destination. You are still lost until you get on the right road that takes you to the right destination.

The Jews knew something of God. They had some knowledge. In fact, Josephus said of the Jews, "***The Jew knows the Law better than his own name***". We don't see this in English but the Greek word here for knowledge in Romans 10:2 (Gk. epignosin) actually means "***full knowledge***". The Jews had some knowledge but not "***full knowledge***". They had just enough knowledge to make them dangerous – as we sometimes say.

They were lacking the FULL knowledge of the truth as found in Jesus. They didn't understand it is by faith in Jesus that one is made righteous!

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Note again the great issue in view here is "righteousness" and how it is attained. In Romans 9:30 the word "righteousness" is mentioned three times. Here again in Romans 10:3 it is mentioned three times. In Romans 9:30-10:21, "righteousness" is mentioned ten times. The BIG IDEA in view here in this whole context is the righteousness of God and how one can have it.

Righteousness is simply the idea of being right with God! There is "God's righteousness" which can one only receive from God by grace. And then there is self-righteousness which before God is no righteousness at all.

The Jews were ignorant of God's righteousness – the God provided way to be right with Him. We saw last week that this ignorance was two-fold.

Slide # 11

Romans 9:32 (NKJV)

32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

The Jews were ignorant of HOW the righteousness of God is attained! They did not understand it is by faith and therefore tried to acquire it by the works of the law. And they did not understand that it is through faith in Jesus and therefore they stumbled over the truth of Jesus the Savior!

Not having the proper knowledge in verse 2 is being ignorant of God's way of righteousness as seen in verse 3 (cf. 1 Tim. 1:13).

The Jews as a whole were ignorant of the fact that God imputes righteousness on the basis of faith alone and not by works! They missed the whole point of FAITH! This was their great downfall!

Being ignorant of God's righteousness they sought "**to establish their own righteousness**". Note the key words "their own". They tried to do it on their own instead of putting their faith in Jesus.

The Jews saw the Law as a means to lift themselves up before God. One rabbi says, “The basic question about religion is how to elevate man, and bring him into a closer relationship with God.

You see the purpose of religion is thought to be to elevate man, not to fundamentally change him from the inside out. Man is at the center of this thinking and how he can elevate himself. In contrast God is at the center of the righteousness of faith which is bestowed purely on the basis of grace as man is seen as being totally incapable of doing anything to please God.

Before God there is trying and there is trusting. Only trusting will get you into a right relationship with God. True saving faith comes to the end of self and trying, and puts all your trust/faith in Jesus. And on this basis God counts one righteous. Righteousness is by believing/trusting/faith which all mean the same thing. And the object of our faith must be JESUS!

Slide # 12

Philippians 3:8–9 (NKJV)

8 Yet indeed I also **count all things loss** for the excellence of the **knowledge** of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the **loss of all things**, and **count them as rubbish**, that I may **gain Christ**

9 and **be found in Him, not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is **through faith in Christ**, the **righteousness which is from God by faith**;

This is what Paul called “the righteousness of faith” in Romans 9:30. This is what the Jews were ignorant of. Instead of going by faith they were going by self-effort and in doing so they “have not submitted to the righteousness of God”.

Not only were the Jews wrong-headed (not according to knowledge – ignorant) they were also wrong-hearted in that they refused to submit to the God provided way of righteousness. This refusing to submit indicates willful rebellion.

Their attempt to be righteous as their own achievement was a refusal to submit to God’s way. – *Leon Morris*

This speaks to the nature of a true saving faith. It includes and involves the element of submission. In saving faith one submits to God’s truth – to God’s way of righteousness which is by faith. It is by faith alone. It is by faith in Jesus.

Slide # 13***Righteousness...***

- Is by FAITH...
- Is by faith ALONE...
- Is by faith alone in JESUS.

Note the contrast here in verse 3...

Slide # 14***Romans 10:3***

- their own righteousness

versus

- the righteousness of God

You can't have it both ways – it is one or the other!

In submitting to God's righteousness we acknowledge a God provided righteousness which is neither in ourselves nor of ourselves (cf. Rom. 1:17; 3:21-22, 3:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:21). This is humbling as we submit to the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It has rightly been said, "***The first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness***". This is what Paul did as seen in Phil. 3:9.

Is righteousness acquired by me bringing myself to God on the basis of my works or on the basis of what Christ did for me at the cross? Do we find righteousness at Mount Sinai (by trying to keep the law of Moses) or do we find it at Mount Calvary (by putting our faith in Jesus as our Savior Who died for all our sins)? The answer is obvious! Salvation is found in Jesus alone when we put our faith in Him!

Acts 4:12 (NKJV)

12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This is a wonderful verse, but unfortunately it is one of the most disputed verses in all of Paul's letters (Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* [Baker], p. 544).

The big dispute is over how to take it when it says "***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness***". There is a lot of discussion over the word "***end***" (Gk. *telos*) because this word can have different nuances.

Some argue that the nuance should be that of ***termination***, others ***fulfillment***, or yet others the idea of ***goal***.

Termination: (The end of the matter). In terms of "termination" the idea is that the finished work of Christ on the cross ended the law for righteousness in the sense that He terminated the Mosaic covenant when He inaugurated a New Covenant. However, we should note that the law was NEVER a means of righteousness because no one could ever keep it. Thus, the law served to convict and condemn – never to provide righteousness. It was ever a "ministry of death" (2 Cor. 3:7).

Fulfill: Others take it in the sense of that Christ came to fulfill the law by being the one Who fulfilled all the OT types, rituals, and sacrifices which pointed to Him. He perfectly kept the law to the end He might be our perfect representative and qualified sin-bearer (cf. Mt. 5:17).

Goal: (To that end). Still others think the nuance in view is that the end goal of the law was that it pointed to Christ in that it showed us our need of a Savior who has now been provided in the person of Jesus. This has now seen an "end" by reason of fulfillment (cf. Gal. 3:24).

There is certainly an element of theological truth in all these views. Therefore many see some combination of these views.

However, I think this is a case of missing the forest for the tree. They are so focused on the single "tree" of the word "end" that they miss the flow of thought here. It would help to look at the context and then read to the end of the sentence.

The whole context here is dealing with how righteousness is acquired. From Romans 9:30 on that is the discussion and it presents a contrast of law/works righteousness as opposed to the righteousness of faith.

Paul in the immediate context (as seen in verse 3) has been describing the Jews who in ignorance tried to establish their own righteousness by law keeping. It is in that context that Paul follows up with this statement: “***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***”

To put it another way: Everyone who is truly believing in Christ is no longer depending on trying to keep the law to attain a righteous stand before God. For them Christ is the end of the law for righteousness because faith in Him alone is now understood to be the basis of a righteous standing before God.

This is true for everyone who believes. A true faith is no longer working, no longer trying to keep the law for righteousness. Rather a saving faith believes in Jesus ALONE for righteousness. It is a matter of going by faith in contrast to going by a works/law-keeping-righteousness. This defines everyone who believes. In their minds Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. They now know righteousness is acquired on the basis of FAITH ALONE.

This is the very same truth Paul brought out back in Romans 4:5...

Slide # 15

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does **not work** but **believes** on Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith** is accounted for righteousness,

To truly believe in Jesus is to no longer believe in a works righteousness. Once one truly understands grace it is the end of a legalistic righteousness.

In saying that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes Paul implies that it is still applicable in some sense for unbelievers. So, Paul is not saying the law has been abolished in every sense. Rather back in Romans 3:31 he said faith does not make void the law but rather establishes it (cf. Romans 7:6-13; Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:23-24; cf. Mark 7:18-19; Luke 16:16; John 1:17; Acts 10:10-15; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 2 Corinthians 3:6-18; Galatians 4:9-11; Galatians 5:1; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 9:10).

The law has *not* come to an end in the sense of no longer reflecting God's standard or no longer showing us our need for a Savior.

– **David Guzik**

The law still has an important role in showing the sinner their need of Christ.

Slide # 16

Romans 3:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for **by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

The issue in context here in Romans 10 is that Paul is emphasizing that for the believer they are no longer seeking to establish their own righteousness by keeping the law as the Jews were prone to do.

Rather, a true believer now has their faith in Christ for righteousness. They now see that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness because they now have righteousness imputed to their account on the basis of faith in Christ.

Slide # 17

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

In 1 Cor. 1:30 Paul says that is Christ Jesus Who is now our righteousness. No longer do we see law-keeping as our righteousness – and in fact we now realize it never was because no one could keep it. Justification has always been on the basis of faith as demonstrated in the life of Abraham as seen in Romans 4.

The saving work of Christ has brought to a close any attempt to attain righteousness by way of law [for “everyone who believes.”]

– **Leon Morris**

Note the emphasis here on “**to everyone who believes**”. This is the whole issue! This is not the way of righteousness only for Jews or only for Gentiles, but to everyone who believes. All who truly believe are no longer trusting in their works or law keeping, but now they are trusting in Christ alone to be their Savior! The defining mark of the saved is they are no longer trusting in what they do for righteousness, but instead in what Christ did for them on the cross.

This emphasis on believing is consistent with what Paul said in Romans 1:17 where he said, “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith” and again with what he said in 3:21-22.

Slide # 18

Romans 3:21–22 (NKJV)

21 But now **the righteousness of God** apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the **righteousness of God, through faith** in Jesus Christ, to all and **on all who believe**.

Illustration: Those seeking to establish their own righteousness by keeping the law are like people trying to swim from New York to London by their own efforts. It’s impossible! Some will do better than others. Some might even swim many miles. But they will all drown and perish in the ocean. Not one will make it. “Those submitting” are like those who simply get into the ship and let the ship take them from New York to London. The ship does all the work. They don’t get themselves there, the ship gets them there. Christ is the One who gets us to God (1 Pet. 3:18; John 14:6). Our own works, our own effort, no matter how sincere and diligent we are, will never get us to God (see Eph.2:8-9; Titus 3:5). Everyone who has come aboard the ship can say: ***“I have no use for swimming anymore! I have found a much better way! I’m trusting this ship to get me to the place where I could never get by swimming! My swimming days have come to an end because I’m on the ship!”*** – George Zeller

Are you on the ship? Have you put your faith in Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. This kind of faith is the mark of all true believers!

Slide # 19

Acts 13:39 (NKJV)

39 and by Him **everyone who believes is justified from all things** from which you **could not be justified by the law of Moses**.

Paul now goes on to contrast righteousness which is of the law with the righteousness of faith.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

Here Paul reiterates the righteous standard required by the law as relayed by Moses in Leviticus 18:5.

Slide # 20

Leviticus 18:5 (NKJV)

5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

The emphasis of the law was doing! The righteousness of the law said you are righteous so long as you DO all that the law requires. This meant that you had to keep the whole law in thought, word, and deed 100% of the time. No one could do it.

Using the swimming/ship illustration again: If you keep on swimming you will get to London! This is very true but it is also very impossible! If you keep the law (perfectly) you will live! This is also very true but very impossible. – **George Zeller**

Slide # 21

James 2:10 (NKJV)

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet **stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**

Slide # 22

Galatians 3:10–12 (NKJV)

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “**Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things** which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

12 Yet **the law is not of faith**, but “**the man who does them shall live by them.**”

Romans 10:5 is just half of Paul’s thought. Note he is contrasting righteousness which is of the law with the righteousness of faith.

Slide # 23

Romans 10:5–6 (NKJV)

5 For Moses writes about the **righteousness which is of the law**, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

6 But the **righteousness of faith** speaks in this way

The Jews did not understand “the righteousness of faith”. They missed the idea of FAITH and that it is by FAITH alone that one acquires a righteous standing before God.

God’s righteousness is provided in the person of Jesus Christ and is attained by FAITH alone. This is God’s way to be right with Him and there is no other way!

Slide # 24

Subject: RIGHTEOUSNESS

Issue: How to obtain? - Works versus Faith

Object of Faith: Jesus ALONE

We often say that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And that is true. Grace is God’s provision in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But faith is the personal response that God demands! It is by faith that we receive Jesus and His righteousness! This is Paul’s major point here. He is emphasizing that righteousness is attained on the basis of FAITH!

Faith doesn’t just happen. You have to personally respond. As Paul will go on to say, “For with the heart one believes” and then the mouth tells on the heart as we confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10).

Slide # 25

My definition of saving faith:

“Saving faith is from the **heart believing** in Jesus Christ alone as my personal **Savior** Who died for all my sins; and as my personal **Lord/Master**, Who is God Almighty as declared by His resurrection from the dead.”

The law/legal formula said “DO AND LIVE”. The grace/faith formula says, “BELIEVE AND LIVE”.

A works-righteousness wrongly says, “I have done it”. A faith-righteousness says, “Jesus has done it – I owe everything to Him.”

What the law does is show us our sin – that we can't measure up to God's holy standard. And in doing so the law points us to our need of a Savior as found in Jesus.

Slide # 26

Galatians 3:24 (NKJV)

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Slide # 27

Contrasts...

Our Righteousness – God's Righteousness

Law – Grace

Works – Faith

Self- Christ

- **GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS** is provided by **GRACE** and received by **FAITH** in **CHRIST**.

It is not the *law* that you must appeal to for righteousness, says Paul to the Jew, it is the *Lord*. It is not Moses, it is Christ – the very One you have rejected. – **John Phillips**

They worshipped their Law and rejected their Savior. The Law was a signpost, pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination. The Law cannot give righteousness; it only leads the sinner to the Savior who can give righteous [to everyone who believes].

– **Warren Wiersbe**

Slide # 28



Imagine a dear old lady who all her life has faithfully attended a mainline Protestant Church in her small town in the Bible belt. She has helped with the nursery and children's ministries, worked in the kitchen during socials, and served in the women's missionary society. Everyone who knows her says that she is one of the sweetest persons they know. She is married to a mean old cuss who has no time for religion. He says that the church is full of hypocrites and do-gooders. Why should he hang out with people like that? He prefers his buddies at the local tavern, who can tell some good off-color jokes, place a friendly bet on a football game, and who swap stories about their latest fishing or hunting adventures. He would rather that his wife not go to church, but years ago he realized that it gave him the freedom to go fishing on Sunday mornings. So he jokes that he's going to baptize a few worms while she gets her religious fix for the week.

If you were to ask her, "On what basis do you hope to get into heaven?" the question would shock her. Why would you even ask? If she could find words to reply, she would say, "Well, all good people go to heaven. I've always tried my best to be nice to others. I've served at church in various ways. And I've usually been able to ignore the mean comments that my husband hurls at me. God knows that I've done the best that I could. I feel that I will go to heaven because I'm a good person."

Lately, her husband hasn't been feeling very well. But like most tough old geezers he avoids the doctor like the plague. But finally he gets worried enough that he schedules an appointment. The doctor runs a few tests and then gently gives him the bad news: "You've got advanced cancer. If you had come a few years ago, we might have gotten it. But there's not much that we can do now. You might have a few months to live."

He goes downhill fast, so they arrange for hospice care. One day, a hospice worker whom he likes is able to share the gospel with him. She tells him that God offers forgiveness for all his sins as a free gift if he will repent of his sins and trust in what Christ did for him on the cross. She leaves him with a Gospel of John. Since he knows his time is short, he devours it. As he reads, God opens his eyes to see his sin and his need for the Savior. He sees that Jesus is God's Son, the Savior of all who trust in Him. He puts his trust in Christ, dies a few weeks later, and goes to heaven.

His wife wouldn't ever say it, but she is secretly relieved that he is gone. He was always so difficult to live with. She continues with all of her religious activities through the church. A few years later, she dies. Because she was trusting in her own righteousness, this nice old lady goes to hell. She had never trusted in Christ as the necessary perfect righteousness that God gives to all who believe. – **Pastor Steven Cole**

This illustrates that being right with God is not about doing – its all about trusting. Many “good” people never get over themselves. They have self-righteousness, but have never humbled themselves and submitted themselves to the righteousness of faith which depends on Jesus ALONE to be right with God.

Let me ask you: Are you depending on your works – on doing the law of God good enough to get you to heaven? Or are you depending on Jesus alone to make you right with God?

It all comes down to this: Are you TRYING or TRUSTING?

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes!

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!