Romans 9:30-10:21

Chapter 9
Verses 30-33:
--***What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 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. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."***
--Paul brings his argument to a conclusion. ***What shall we say, then?*** We must say that the Israelites are missing out on God's promises, not because His Word has failed, or He has acted unrighteously, or unfairly. Israel has not attained to righteousness because they sought it the wrong way!
--The Gentiles found God's righteousness because of faith, but the Jews missed it because they sought to be righteous before God based on their own works.
--Paul then quotes two passages from Isaiah **(8:14 + 28:16)**, each referencing a divine ***stone*** or ***rock*** that God had provided for the Israelites in the context of an impending Assyrian invasion. The Jews had a choice to either avail themselves of God's provision or stumble over it.
--Of course, Christ teaches His disciples that He Himself is the ultimate Rock of salvation that the church is built upon. This is echoed by the apostle Peter as well: **1 Peter 2:6-8.**
--If we believe and lean on Him, build our lives on Him, then He is precious to us indeed! ***And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame***—Is the inscription carved upon that Rock of Ages.

Chapter 10
Verses 1-4:
--**(1)** ***Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.***
--Here again, the Holy Spirit has Paul affirm his love for his people. His heart is stirred for them in what he is teaching. Even today, if you speak God's Word of correction or salvation, if you make clear from God's Word who is getting to heaven and who is not, then you will be considered unloving.
--We must remember God sees things differently! He knows the true value of truth and love. Jesus Christ lived as the fullness of both. We are called to love others, not convince them of our love.
--**(2)** ***For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.***
--Paul acknowledges that the Jews are zealous—he knew that better than most!—yet their zeal was without knowledge. *Muslim's, JW's, Unsaved, Uza and the Ark, etc. Sincerity ends up hurting the racer who is running in the wrong direction.*

--**(3)** ***For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.***
--Paul makes it clear what type of ignorance he is speaking of. The Jews are ***ignorant of God's righteousness***—as he has spoken of in chapters **1-5**.
--Again, there are only two types of righteousness: Ours through works or God's through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The first is earned, and the second is a gracious gift.
3:22:** ***Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference.*
--**(4)** ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***
--Christ brought an end to the law, not by destroying it, but by fulfilling and realizing it. They should have literally seen His life as the perfect law enfleshed! *But I say to you. . . Lord of the Sabbath. . . What authority He speaks with. . . Corban. . . etc.*
--The Jews thought that life was in the law because God gave it. So they willingly submitted to the law but ignored the fact that God gave them His own Son—the law in greater life, clarity, and prophetic fulfillment and signs than any OT revelation!
--(It is a separate point, but the prophecies of the last days Church like Laodicea, picture something very similar to Jesus Christ standing outside of His church knocking!)
8:4:** ***That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*
--Those who are "in Christ" have all righteousness through Him. He is our righteousness.

Verses 5-8:
--Here again, Paul is contrasting the life and language of righteousness through the law with righteousness through faith.
--**(5)** ***For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."***
--First, Paul quotes from **Leviticus 18:5** (which is also picked up in **Lk. 10:28 & Gal. 3:12**) where life was promised to those who do and live.
--There was a life found in the law, but so was sin, as the continual parade of sacrifices always reminded the worshiper or seeker of righteousness. Only the Son of Man ever truly *lived* the law.
--**(6-8)** ***But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 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 preach):***
--Second, Paul quotes from **Deuteronomy 30:11-14,** which has a unique context. Moses is leaving and surrendering leadership to Joshua. The people fear life without him, as he was the word of God to them, and they have just been presented with blessings and curses. Moses is reminding them that the Word of God is near them—it is simple—they know it.

--Paul takes that and places Jesus Christ in the place of the law or commandment and is thereby encouraging the simplicity and nearness of our faith in Him.

Verses 9-10:

--***that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

--Here again, Paul plays off the use of mouth and heart in **Deuteronomy 30:11-14,** as there is always a connection between the two in Scripture. Our confession is not magic words—that is superstition!—it is evidence of the salvation that has come to the heart by faith.

--***Out of the abundance of the heart. . .No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. . . you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'. . . Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart. . .***

--Sure, anyone can lie, but in reality, our speech and heart are always connected. God knows what we are saying in our hearts, no matter what is coming out of our lips—good or bad!

--Here is what Israel needed to confess in truth:

Acts 2:36:** ***Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

--We have so many fears when it comes to salvation, but the word is near to us if we would only believe it with childlike faith! *Christ did all the work! All that is left is to believe.*

1) Do you believe Jesus is Lord?

2) Do you believe God raised Him from the dead?

3) Then why do you not believe the rest of what the verses say? Salvation is yours, and you will not be put to shame!

*Buechner (Whistling in the Dark): "Along similar lines, New Testament Greek speaks of believing 'into' rather than believing 'in'. In English we can perhaps convey the distinction best by using either 'in' or no preposition at all.

Believing in God is an intellectual position. It need have no more effect on your life than believing in Freud's method of interpreting dreams or the theory that Sir Francis Bacon wrote *Romeo and Juliet.*

Believing God is something else again. It is less a position than a journey, less a realization than a relationship. It doesn't leave you cold like believing the world is round. It stirs your blood like believing the world is a miracle. It affects who you are and what you do with your life like believing your house is on fire or somebody loves you.

We believe in God when, for one reason or another, we choose to do so. We believe God when somehow we run into God in way that by and large leaves us no choice to do otherwise.

When Jesus says that whoever believes "into" him shall never die, he does not mean that to be willing to sign your name to the Nicene Creed guarantees eternal life. Eternal life is not the result of *believing in*. It is the experience of *believing*."*

Verses 11-13:

--**(11-12)** ***For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.***

--By quoting again from Isaiah, Paul is pressing the point that the Jews should have seen that the word ***whosoever*** actually meant ***whosoever***! Jew and Gentile.

--**(13)** ***For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."***

--Here again, by quoting from **Joel 2:32** (which Peter also picks up in his first sermon on Pentecost), Paul emphasizes the expansive offer of salvation in the Messiah.

--As it was on earth with Jesus Christ—this man, this face—is what will ultimately bring glory or shame to every individual. We will all be forced to look into His face!

*Buechner (The Faces of Jesus): *"The writers of the New Testament give no description of any of them because it was his life alive inside them that was the news they hawked rather than the color of his eyes. When you think the world is on fire, you don't take time out to do a thumbnail sketch."**

--The Messiah was there, and heaven and hell were being placed before their very eyes. We don't see Christ's face save in the faces of those the gospel writers describe around Him, but we will one day see Him with our own eyes. And in that day, all that will matter is whether the ***Lord over all*** is going to be rich toward us as His sons and daughters, or whether He will say to us: *Depart from Me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you.*

--Shame in this world. . . we have never known it. There is only one moment of true shame, and that will be eternal.

Verses 14-15:

--***How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And who shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And who shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"***

--God is no longer sending the Messiah in human flesh to the world. Now, it is the message of the Lamb slain, risen, and coming again in glory. That is beautiful news!

--Paul quotes **Isaiah 52:7,** whose context is the release of exiles from captivity, but here we have even better news—that of eternal salvation.

--The saving power is in the message, not in the messenger. *Jonah*

Verses 16-21:

--**(16-17)** ***But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

--Paul wants to answer some other questions he knew would come up. Such as: *But have the Jews heard this message?* Or, *What if they couldn't understand it?*

--Paul answers both these questions.
--First, he doubles down on his point that only the *message* or *report* of God can build faith.
*Tozer (The Set of the Sail): "*A church is strong or weak just as it holds to a high or low idea of God. For faith rests not primarily upon promises, but upon character. A believer's faith can never rise higher than his conception of God. A promise is never better or worse than the character of the one who makes it. An inadequate conception of God must result in a weak faith, for faith depends upon the character of God just as a building rests upon its foundation… How then shall unbelief be cured and faith be strengthened? Surely not by straining to believe the Scriptures, as some do. Not by a frantic effort to believe the promises of God. Not by gritting our teeth and determining to exercise faith by an act of the will. All this has been tried—and it never helps. To try thus to superinduce faith is to violate the laws of the mind and to do violence to the simple psychology of the heart.*

What is the answer? Job told us, 'Acquaint thyself with him and be at peace,'; and Paul said, 'So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' These two verses show the way to a strong and lasting faith: <u>Get acquainted with God through reading the Scriptures, and faith will come naturally.</u> This presupposes that we come to the Scriptures humbly, repudiating self-confidence and opening our minds to the sweet operations of the Spirit.

*Otherwise stated: Faith comes effortlessly to the heart as we elevate our conceptions of God by a prayerful digestion of His Word. And such faith endures, for it is grounded upon the Rock."**
--For all believers, that starts with salvation, and moves on through the rest of the Christian life. Remember ***the just shall live by faith.*** We start that way and finish that way. Trust in God to be true to the character revealed in His Word. *A life of faith is not just for poor people without money or sick people with terminal health issues, but those with nice cars and houses as well.*
--For those who don't know Him, they cannot believe without His message! *Sadly, there are entire churches (as there were synagogues) where God is mentioned but His Word—His message—is never once mentioned, and therefore, they are filled with people who have no saving faith.*
--**(18) *But I say, have they not heard? Yes, indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."***
--But have the Jews heard? Paul says, Yes! He quotes the Psalms, which speak of God being known in all creation, to say that His Word is also passed into all the world.
--Sadly, the Jews were known for rejecting God's message and His messengers. They slandered just about all of them from Moses on to Jesus Himself.

Matthew 13:13-17:** ***Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: *Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.* ***But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.****

--**(19-21)** ***But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."***

But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

--Did Israel have any idea of the Gentiles being a part of God's plans? Yes!

--Again, Paul quotes from the Word to show that God always planned to be merciful to the whole world and even to provoke Israel to jealousy through the Gentiles.

--Sadly, God is seen with hands outstretched toward a disobedient people. And what do we see from the One who shows us the Father? The very same heart!

Matthew 23:37-39:** ***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*