

The Gospel Announced: The Gospel is for everyone

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Our reading starts at page 1136 of the Church Bible and it's Romans chapter 9 verse 30 and I'm reading straight through to chapter 10 verse 13. So that's page 1136.

What then shall we say that the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith? But Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge, since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own. They did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law. The man who does these things will live by them. But the righteousness that is by faith says, Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down. Or who will descend into the deep? That is, to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does it say? The word is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart. That is, the word of faith we are proclaiming. That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

As the scripture says, anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all, and richly blesses all who call on him.

[2 : 20] For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Thanks very much, Trish. So keep your Bibles open, have a pen at hand, and you can take notes as we go along.

Again, if you would like a summary of Romans chapter 9 to 11, then you can look that up on the church website. On one of the recent posts, you will see that there's a couple of articles there which gives a summary, and that might just help you to remember all that it's about. So you can look that up on the church website. Let's pray then and ask for God's help.

Father, we thank you for the privilege of having your word. Lord, we thank you, too, that you have given to us your Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate teacher, the one who not only gives us understanding in our minds, but applies it to our hearts, the one who changes us, and the one who helps us to see who Jesus is and what he has done. And so we pray now for his help.

May your power be at work amongst us individually. Would you be at work in our families? And will you be at work within this church family?

Would you be pleased to do your work so that it brings honour and glory to you? We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

[4 : 17] Amen. Well, when the madness and the busyness of the day is over, and you're lying awake in bed, what do you dream of for your life?

What do you most long for and want? A peaceful and easier life? A better job and a bigger home? Or what about your children?

What is your desire for your children? What above all else do you want them to have? A good education? A stable job?

A happy life? Or what about those who are closest to you? Your friends? What's your longing for them? What do you see as the most important thing for them in their life?

An end to an illness, maybe? Or them finding a partner? Well, if we are followers of the Lord Jesus, there should be one main desire.

[5 : 28] Look at chapter 10, verse 1. Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites, for those who are closest to me, my people, my heart's desire and prayer to God is that they may be saved.

The one thing that keeps me awake at night, the one thing that consumes my thinking by day and shapes my prayers, is that those who I know and love would become Christians.

My dream and my desire is that they are saved. You see, for us to experience God's salvation means to be free from all of our guilt and shame, to be forgiven of all of our sin, past, present and future, to be welcomed in and treasured as one of God's own children, and to be given the promise of life in his new creation for all eternity.

Not to be saved means to face God's just and fair judgment, to be shut out from God's presence, to be cut off from all that is good and beautiful.

It will be hell itself for all eternity. And so the one controlling desire is that our friends and our family are saved.

[7 : 08] And here's the good news. There's a wonderful promise in chapter 10 verse 13. Do you see it there? Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Not some people, not a privileged few, not a special select group, but look at verse 10 or verse 13. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. You see, whatever our dreams and desires are, God's heart is that everyone would hear the good news and experience the salvation that he has to offer.

So there's this wonderful invitation, but it comes with three conditions, and we're going to look at them each one.

An open invitation, but three conditions. Here's the first one. There is only one way to receive salvation.

[8 : 23] Only one way to receive salvation. Now this comes in two parts. There's the first part. We receive it by faith and not works. Look at verse 30. Chapter 9, verse 30.

Having been talking about the salvation, he says in verse 30, What then shall we say? That the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith.

But Israel who pursued a law of righteousness has not attained it. You see, in these couple of verses here, we're introduced to two kinds of people.

Look at verse 30. We've got the Gentiles. They were not very religious people. They weren't the kind of people who read their Bibles. They weren't interested in going to church.

And then in verse 31, we've got the religious people, the people of Israel. They're the kind of people you meet day to day who are wanting to go to church. They're the people who pray and read and they're interested in religious things.

[9 : 28] But the surprise here between these two groups of people is the kind of person who actually receives righteousness. And righteousness here is right standing with God.

It's salvation. And here's the surprise in these two verses. The religious person who works for salvation doesn't receive it.

Verse 32. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works.

You see, some people think that you earn your way into God's favour. People think that you build up lots of points and therefore you deserve God's acceptance. Look at me.

Look at what I did this week. In other words, you're working for it. But the surprise is, it's completely the opposite. Verse 30 again.

[10 : 28] The Gentiles, these are the people who aren't very religious, who weren't pursuing righteousness, who weren't working for their salvation. They have got it.

They have received this righteousness because it is by faith. So, we receive it by faith, not works. And here's the second part to it.

By faith, not works, in Christ, and not ourselves. You see, faith must be placed somewhere. And it's placed in a person, Jesus Christ, and what he has done.

So, verse 32. Let's read from there again. They pursued it, not by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

What's the stumbling stone? Well, let's read on. As it is written, See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him.

[11 : 31] So, the rock is a person. So, the one who trusts in this person will never be put to shame. You see, God had promised that he was going to set up a stone, excuse me, a rock.

Not a physical rock, but a king, a person who was going to come and save and rule, and that rock is Jesus Christ.

Now, the person who has faith in themselves rather than in Jesus, then the rock becomes an obstacle.

Look at verse 33 again. It's a stone that causes people to stumble. It's a rock that makes people fall. Why?

Well, because they're trying to get salvation on their own. And so, when they are confronted with Jesus who says, I am the only way to salvation, he becomes an obstacle to get rid of.

[12 : 29] He's something that's in the way that we don't want and so people want to kill him and get rid of him. But the person who does have faith in Jesus, then this rock, as we heard earlier, becomes the foundation for your life.

It becomes the place to stand on and a shelter to hide in. Look at the end of verse 33. The one who trusts in him, who trusts in this rock, Jesus Christ, will never be put to shame.

So our faith is placed somewhere. It's placed in a person, in Jesus, a place to stand on, a shelter to hide in. And here's why.

Here's why we must have our faith in Jesus. Look at verse 4. chapter 10 verse 4. It tells us there that this rock, Jesus, is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness or salvation for everyone who believes.

Now look at that little phrase there, Christ is the end of the law. This is what it means. Two things. First, Jesus becomes the law keeper for us.

[13 : 48] He obeyed it and He never broke it. He lived it and He never failed it. And He did it, He obeyed it for you and for me. And so in response, our faith is in the obedience of Jesus who kept the law for us.

We fail in the law, but He obeyed it perfectly. So my faith is in His perfect performance and not mine. So Jesus, do you see, He becomes the rock on which we stand.

We stand on His perfect obedience for you and for me. But the second part to this is, Jesus also became a lawbreaker for us.

Now by that I mean, I don't mean that He went and broke the law, but that He was treated as a lawbreaker for us. He took our disobedience on Himself and He was punished as if He failed and disobeyed.

But it was always in our place. So our faith is in Jesus' death for you and for me. Our faith is in Him who took the blame for me for all my failures for not keeping the law and doing what is right.

[15 : 02] So Jesus becomes the rock in which we shelter, in which we hide. He is the rock in which we stand. the rock in which we shelter.

Our faith is in a person, in Christ who has completed and done it all for you and for me. So there's only one way to receive salvation.

We receive it by faith, not works, in Christ and not ourselves. Here's the second condition.

It's an open invitation, but there is only one place to find salvation. There's only one place to find salvation.

Again, this comes in two parts. We find it first not on our own. We can't find it on our own. Chapter 10, verse 5.

[15 : 59] Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law, or the way in which salvation comes by the law. The man who does these things will live by them.

Now, in some ways, this is just a summary of all that he's just said, that some people trying to find salvation on their own. They try to achieve it by avoiding Jesus and depending on their own ability. So the man who does these things will live by them. He must keep to the law and do everything that it says. In this case, for people, it is following the law that they must do religious things, and if they think they do religious things, that's going to be enough.

For somebody else, their particular law might be being tolerant and being open to other people, and if I'm a very tolerant and loving kind of person of all people in different ways, then that's going to get me salvation.

But the point is, we never ever find salvation on our own. We'll never find it in our own particular systems, or in the places that we look.

[17 : 09] Look at verse 6. The righteousness that is by faith, or the salvation that comes by faith says, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to try and bring Christ down, or who will descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

You see, he's saying, look, you can go searching to the highest heights, you can go looking down to the deepest depths, but you're not going to find it.

Everyone, as we said earlier, is longing for salvation. We're all in search of rest and peace. We all long for something different in our lives and for the world to be better.

And some people turn to religion, some people turn to Islam or Buddhism, other people run away from religion and they try to find it in atheism or humanism.

We search for it in people, we look for it in all kinds of different places, but the point is we never ever find it. Why? Because in all the places we search and in all the places we look, it's always demanding something from us.

[18 : 27] It's always asking of us something that we must do or something that we must achieve which we can never ever live up to. So where do we find our salvation that we search for?

Well, we don't find it on our own. We find it in God's word, the gospel. Look at verse 8. So what does it say? The word is near you.

It is in your mouth and it is in your heart. That is the word of faith, the word of the gospel that we are proclaiming.

So the reason that they have the word of the gospel in them, the word of faith in them, is because it has been proclaimed to them. And that's where we find salvation.

We find salvation in the word of faith, in the gospel message. That's where we'll see it. So we don't need to go searching because Jesus has already come down from heaven to search for us.

[19 : 40] We don't need to go looking because Jesus lives. He has been raised from the grave and he's still looking for people. And that message of hope of Jesus searching and looking for us is near to us.

He tells us in verse 8 that it's in the word of faith. It's in the gospel and it's that gospel word that will save us. Look at verse 9 of chapter 10.

He says, look, we've told you this message, we've proclaimed to you, verse 9, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

That's the message. This is the gospel that has been proclaimed to you. Now, we must be clear on this. This isn't some kind of spiritual mantra so that everybody who rattles off the words, Jesus is Lord, at some particular meeting or a camp or whatever the place may be, that somehow that's it, that's the end of it, that I'm now saved.

No, look at verse 10. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

[21 : 04] You see, what comes out of your mouth, what you speak and what you say, is an outward expression of what's going on inside your life, inside your heart.

In other words, if you believe with your heart, if you are trusting in the rock, Jesus Christ, the one whom you stand on, the one that you take shelter in, if you believe in him, and you express that with your mouth, you will be saved.

The point is, in these few verses here, is that we must never ever think that God is playing a game of hide and seek with us, that he's kind of somewhere out there and we've got to go find him and search for him somewhere.

The opposite is true. He is the one who has come to search for us. He is the one who's come and made himself known to us today through his word, the gospel.

This is what we have right here in God's word, in the Bible. It has been made known to us. So there's only one place to find salvation.

[22 : 21] We find it not on our own, but we find it in God's word, the gospel. So, the third condition, it's an open invitation to all.

And third, there is only one way to experience salvation. Look at verse 11. As the scripture says, anyone who trusts in him, in Christ, will never be put to shame.

So, rather than think that salvation is just for a select few, we should understand that this is an offer that is open to all. Verse 13.

Everyone, who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved. It is an offer without limits. It is told out to the world.

This is the generosity of God. Now, while the offer is open to anyone, we must also understand that the way to experience this gospel, this message of salvation, is also the same for everyone.

[23 : 37] Look at verse 12. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all, and richly blesses all who call on him.

It doesn't matter, he's saying, what your background is. Whether you would describe yourself as a religious person, or whether you would say you are irreligious. It doesn't matter what the colour of your skin is, or the language that you speak.

Whether you were raised in a Christian home, or whether you didn't have that. Whether you are rich or poor, skilled or unskilled. Look what it says in verse 12. There is no difference between the Jew, the religious person, and the Gentile, the irreligious person.

There is no difference. God makes no distinction. He has no favourites. no one person has an advantage over another person.

He works salvation in each and every person in exactly the same way. Look at the second part of verse 12. The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

[24 : 59] Salvation is available to all. How? through his riches. The riches of his grace. God doesn't have one way of working with one particular people and another way of working with somebody else.

He saves all of us in exactly the same way by his grace. Now that's good news because that means if he treats and he deals with all of us in exactly the same way then we're all on the same playing field.

Nobody here can feel inferior to anybody else and nobody can be superior to anybody else. We're all on the same playing field and that means that if I am a Christian then that means anybody else can become a Christian.

And if God has saved you and you are trusting in Jesus Christ then that means he can save any of your friends and family too. There's only one way to experience salvation and that is through God's grace which is open to all.

Now I want to finish with two things. If you've got notes the little A5 sheet they're written there, they're not on the screen but here they are, here's the first thing.

[26 : 34] If you are not yet a Christian is there any reason why you have not yet received salvation? It's an offer that has been given to you.

And it says very simply that in verse 11 that anyone who trusts in him will not be put to shame. There is an open invitation.

You've heard it. What's stopping you from trusting in it? And the second question is this.

If you are a Christian maybe you've got it into your mind that you think I've got this friend or I've got this person in my family and they're not yet a Christian and I just don't think it's possible.

Well look at what it's saying here. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And so chapter 10 verse 1 we can pray for that person trusting them into God's care and trusting him that he will do his work in their lives.

[27 : 50] So who is that person that you could be praying for that could become a Christian? So two things. If you are not yet a Christian why not?

And if you are a Christian who are you praying for that could become a Christian? Let's just take a moment to reflect on that and pray through those things.

let's just do that in the quietness now. If you are a Christian then pray for that person right now who you know that they too might become a follower of Jesus.

And if you are not yet a Christian why not ask that you might receive salvation from him.

Thank you.

[29 : 20] Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for your generous and open invitation. We pray for your ongoing saving work in our lives and within our community.

Father, give us a heart that we would continue to desire and to pray that those who we know and love would yet become followers of you.

Amen. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.