

God's Riches

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[0 : 00] For 40 long years, Moses had led the people of Israel in the wilderness.

For 40 years. And now it was time to enter the land. He wouldn't be going with them, of course. And so as they gathered, as his people, the people that he'd led out of Egypt some 40 years ago, gathered in Moab, east of the Dead Sea, before they would go north and across the Jordan, Moses spoke to the people one last time.

And he had strong words for them that day. He reminded them of all that the Lord had done before their eyes in Egypt.

He reminded them that for 40 years they had wandered, disciplined by God for their disobedience, and still their hearts are hard. And Moses knew it.

[1 : 19] To this day, he said, the Lord has not given you a heart to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.

And with their hearts still hard, they were entering now again into the covenant of the Lord their God, which the Lord himself was making with them. And Moses knew what was ahead.

So he warned them. He said, beware, lest there be among you a man, or a woman, or clan, or tribe, whose heart is turning today away from the Lord our God, to go and to serve the gods of those nations.

Beware, lest there be among you one who, when he hears the words of this covenant, the covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.

They were not safe. Moses knew they were not safe. Moses knew that they would perish. Moses knew that the Lord would bring curses upon the people of Israel and drive them into exile.

[2 : 42] He knew it. He knew that one day the nations would say of Israel, the Lord uprooted them from their land and cast them into another. Exile was the future that Moses saw for the people of Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 29.

But it wasn't the last thing Moses saw. It wasn't the end of the story that he saw ahead for the people of Israel.

A few moments ago, you heard the beginning of Deuteronomy chapter 30 read for us. And in the beginning of Deuteronomy chapter 30, Moses refers to a time even further in the future, to the time when the exile itself would be over.

And of that time of return, there was one great hope that stands out when you read Moses' speech to the people of Israel. One great hope, and it is, the promise that the Lord would finally change their hearts.

Deuteronomy 30 verse 6, After all these things will come upon you, the blessings and the curses of the covenant that I've just laid out for you, Moses says, and you'll be exiled, there's hope, and the Lord your God, this is verse 6, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

[4 : 16] That you may live. Our text this morning as we hear from the living God and His word is in Paul's letter to the Romans, in chapter 10, in verses 4 to 13.

But we begin with Deuteronomy 30, because it is Deuteronomy 30 that's in Paul's mind. And it is these very words of Moses, spoken to the people of Israel in Moab, words of hope, of restoration, of return, of renewal of their hearts, that is very much in Paul's mind.

He wants to say something about the heart. And he cares very much about the hearts of the people of Israel. He's in anguish over the hearts of his beloved Israel.

Since the start of chapter 9, we've been walking with Paul step by step as he raised the greatest challenge to the faithfulness of God, the seeming failure of God's plan for Israel.

Because Israel, on the whole, rejected the Christ, the Messiah spoken of by the law, and the prophets of their own scriptures who came to save them, and they missed it. So had God's plan failed?

[5 : 33] Well, you know Paul's conclusion. Chapter 9, verse 6, he front loads it. Can't wait to say it later. He says it right at the beginning. It's not as though the word of God has failed. It's not failed.

And Paul then has two huge reasons why that's so. And reason number one was election. And that took us to verse 29 of chapter 9, and we had two sermons on election.

And then the second reason started last week, and you saw that second huge reason, and the second reason was their unbelief. Election and unbelief.

Those are Paul's two answers, and they're not contradictory answers. They speak to the same reality of what Israel has done. The same reality viewed, as it were, from God's perspective and from our perspective.

Election and unbelief. And our text this morning is part of the second answer. It's really just part two of the sermon that you heard David preach last week.

[6 : 39] And the point hasn't changed, that the vast majority of Israel missed the Christ because they did not believe. Look at chapter 9, verse 30 to get us into our text here, finally.

Long introduction. Look at chapter 9, verse 30. What shall we say then? It's page 946. That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it.

That is, a righteousness that is by faith. But that Israel, who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness, did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? How is it that Israel had the law that would lead to righteousness, but even though they had it and the Gentiles didn't have it, it's the Gentiles who are finding the righteousness and not Israel.

Because, Paul says, in verse 32, they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.

[7 : 40] For, he explains in chapter 10, verse 3, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own. They did not submit to God's righteousness.

The problem was not that they wanted righteousness. The problem was not that they wanted to be righteous in God's sight, to be identified as God's children, to be declared to be in the right before God, to be accepted by God.

That's not the problem. We need righteousness. If we're not to be put to shame, as Paul puts it at the end of chapter 9. We need what God requires in order for God to declare that we are His people.

We need that. We need righteousness, right standing before God. But Israel doesn't have it because they sought to establish their own righteousness as if it were based on works.

As if God was going to accept them because of something that they had done on their own.

Anything. Take your pick. Whatever it was. It was never meant to work that way.

[8 : 56] The law wasn't given to be a guide for making yourself righteous before God. That's not how God's people were ever, ever, ever to relate to Him. No one is a child of God because he or she did something that merits that status.

It was never so. It's always been 100% by the mercy of God. And you know what the final evidence is that they had it wrong? The final evidence is where we start and that's in verse 4 of chapter 10.

Because if Israel had submitted to God's righteousness, if they had pursued by faith the law that would lead to righteousness, they would have embraced the Christ, Paul says.

Because to everyone who believes, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. The completion. The goal.

The goal towards which the law was always pointing. If Israel had pursued their righteousness by faith, they would have accepted the Christ. That's verse 4 of chapter 10 summarizing what David had said last week and that really becomes then the point even of the rest of our passage this morning because Paul spends these verses now unpacking that statement in verse 4.

[10 : 16] So that's what I want to do. We'll look at verses 5 to 13 just in two parts with each part related to verse 4. So verses 5 to 8 I'll look at first and I hope that will help to see something about how Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

And then I'll move to verses 9 to 13 and I hope that will help us to see something about how this is to everyone who believes. So I hope that's clear enough.

It seemed clear when I came up with it a couple days ago but in the 9 o'clock service I found myself wishing I had had something a little more catchy to hang it all on but we'll just go with this.

There's two parts here then. I'm looking first at verses 5 to 8 which I take to unpack. It's not all that's going on here but for us at least unpacking the first part of verse 4 that Christ is the end, the fulfillment, the goal, not the termination.

the end, the fulfillment, the goal of the law for righteousness that it is through Christ, through Christ that we can be righteous before God and that that's exactly what the law itself pursued by faith should lead us to see.

[11 : 35] And if that's what you want to say, if you're Paul and you're writing this letter and that's what you're trying to communicate then what you'd better do is start quoting from the law itself to make sense of it, right?

It's exactly what Paul does beginning in verse 5. For, he says. For, because. This is why Christ is the goal of the law. It's because of what Moses said.

Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. shall live by them.

Now, the ESV doesn't use quote marks there but Paul is citing from Leviticus chapter 18 verse 5. The person who does the commandments shall live by them.

And I just think the point is a basic one. I just think Moses is saying, Paul is saying, that to do the commandments of God is to live.

[12 : 45] Because to do the commandments of God is to walk with God. Leviticus 18 begins with the Lord telling Moses to say to the people of Israel, Israel, I am the Lord your God.

I am. You don't have to make me be the Lord your God. I am the Lord your God. You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt where you lived.

You shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan to which I am bringing you. I delivered you. I'm your God. Follow my rules. Keep my statutes and walk in them.

That's not a negative thing. It's not a negative thing for God to tell us what to do. We ought to want to do it if we know the Lord. Shouldn't we? Isn't that our heart's desire?

To walk in the ways of God is to live. If your law had not been my delight, the psalmist said, if it hadn't been my delight, I would have perished. I will never forget your precepts for by them you have given me life.

[13 : 56] It is death to live your life outside of the will of God and His commandments. It's death.

Do we believe that? That is what Moses himself would say to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 30. If, he says, Deuteronomy 30, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, then you shall live.

I set before you today the choice between death and life. Choose life. Walk with God. Follow His commandments.

Deuteronomy 30. But now, this raises for us a crucial question. We talked earlier about Deuteronomy 30.

So maybe you would like to ask Moses this question. Well, Moses, how exactly is that going to happen? Because Israel sure didn't do it.

[15 : 09] Israel, on the whole, did not do it. Moses knew they wouldn't do it. Well, there would always be a remnant of faithful Israelites who walked with God, right? There always would be a remnant.

But on the whole, they wouldn't do it. You know your Old Testament well enough to know that. They do exactly the opposite. Exactly what Moses told them not to do. So what's the solution?

How do we live in the way that Leviticus tells us to live? And it is to answer that question, I think, that Paul now moves in verses 6 to 8 specifically to the context of Deuteronomy 30 into that same context in which Moses himself says straight up to the people of Israel, you will not do the commandments and live.

You just won't do it because your hearts are hard. Remember? Remember that Moses knew they would be exiled, that they would be cursed by God.

But that there's coming a day, Moses says, there's coming a day in which God himself would change your hearts so that they will love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul so that they may live, he says.

[16 : 28] That's the day to which Moses was looking. That's the day when the intent of Leviticus would be realized and as I read Paul, I think he means to say that that's the day that is now, is today.

Because in verses 6 to 8 now, Paul references, pulls, draws on, changes a bit, but he's drawing on verses 11 through 14 of Deuteronomy 30. You heard them read earlier, I want to read them again, but I want you not to go to Deuteronomy.

I'd like it if you'd look at Romans 10. Have your eyes on verses 6 to 8 of Romans 10 while I read verses 11 to 14 of Deuteronomy 30 so that you can see something about what Paul's doing here. This is, I think, about the hardest use of the Old Testament by the Apostle Paul that I've ever tried to study and sort out. So, I won't be able to get every nuance out there for you, but if you're looking at Romans 10, 6 to 8, I'll read Deuteronomy 30, 11 to 14, and see if you can track with at least where Paul's drawing from here.

This is Moses. For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

[17 : 48] It is not in heaven that you should say, who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, and Paul has, into the abyss.

Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it? No, the word is very near you.

It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it. That's Moses.

That's Moses looking ahead to the time when God's people would be restored from exile, when their hearts would be circumcised, and when the commandments of God, the law of God is no longer far away.

The word is not far from then that they have to work to try and get to it. It's in their hearts. It's in their mouths. And they'll love the Lord with all their heart and soul and they'll live. And Paul's drawing specifically on that context and I think he means for us to see that this great hope spoken of by Moses and as you know picked up by the prophets in text, you know them like Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36 where the Lord promises in the new covenant to restore the heart, renew the heart, give His Spirit to write the law on our hearts.

[19 : 11] This is the beginning of that promise. This is the hope that will be realized, Paul is saying, by those who have faith in Jesus Christ. Did you notice as I was reading how where Moses has commandment in Deuteronomy, Paul has Christ.

Do not act as though it's up to you to attain to the commandments so as to live. The commandments find their fulfillment in Christ and you cannot keep the commandments and live as Leviticus tells us to do without faith in Jesus Christ.

Because if you do not have faith, your heart has not been changed. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, Paul says.

And we don't have to do anything to bring Him near. He came down from heaven, He was raised from the dead on the third day, you didn't have to do any of that. God did it all.

This is where we find life. And if we have faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the demonstration of God's absolute righteousness and faithfulness, we submit to Jesus Christ as the way of life with God.

[20 : 38] It is the only way to attain what Israel did not attain. It is the fulfillment of the promise that Moses himself spoke to the people of Israel east of the Dead Sea before they even entered the land in the first place.

This is the only way in which we come to fulfill the law and live in obedience to God. By this we know that we have come to know Him, John says, if we keep His commandments.

Hasn't changed. Do you know Him? Are you alive? Now the rest of this passage in verses 9 to 13, the second part of this, I'll focus here on how it is that these verses key into the connection that this is for everyone who believes.

Everyone who believes. And these are well-known verses. We all know these verses very well. I wonder though if you've ever noticed how Paul is just continuing on with the thought of Deuteronomy 30.

He's just quoted from Deuteronomy. He says, the word is near you. It's in your mouth. It's in your heart. God's changed your heart, Christian. And if I'm right, Paul sees that the word of which Moses spoke there points to Christ.

[21 : 56] And so in verse 9, he makes the connection. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Can you see a little bit what Paul has done? He's thinking about the heart and the mouth that Moses talks about in the coming day when His people will return to Him and live the heart and the mouth. And Paul thinks, what are the heart and the mouth for? What do they do with Christ? The heart believes. The heart believes. And the mouth confesses what the heart believes.

And Paul sees that this is the pathway to salvation that opens the door to righteousness. The righteousness that Israel had hoped for but didn't attain because they pursued it not by faith. And now it opens the door to the Gentiles as we'll see. But I just want to stop and say you have to be careful here. This is not some magic formula for salvation.

[23 : 11] Because you can't separate the heart and the mouth into separate activities. It's not just that you believe in your heart that Jesus is raised from the dead but you don't actually have to confess it with your mouth and make it real in your life and actually say something that might cost you to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

No. And it's not just that you confess it and say whatever you want. You can say words all the time. You said it. You said the Apostles Creed today. You proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.

But it's not just in saying it that you're saved. It's saying it when it connects to the core of your being. That the mouth speaks what the heart believes. And it's the most beautiful thing in the world when they're the same.

And they're in line with one another. And that the heart believes that God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and that therefore Jesus Christ is Lord.

The risen victor over all his enemies has the name above every other name. The name of the Lord. is the Lord. That's why you need to bring yourself and your friends to Easter Sunday when David Short will preach exactly on those verses that the heart will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord because we believe in the resurrection.

[24 : 44] Paul's point is that your heart must be changed to believe that. and that's exactly what God himself is in the business of doing. He's in the business of changing hearts circumcising hearts so that you love him so that you love Jesus Christ and live so that you come to God for salvation and pursue the righteousness that is based on faith by believing on Christ in your heart and giving expression to that in your life and by your mouth as you confess proclaim declare that you call on Jesus Christ as Lord Lord of your life Lord of the universe and it is for everyone who believes that Gentile and Jew alike it is the answer for why so many in Israel did not come to faith but it is also how God has opened the door of salvation to all for the scripture says verse 11 Paul's quoting from Isaiah 28 16 the scripture says everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame now if you go back later and look up

Isaiah 28 16 what you'll see is that Paul by the inspiration of God added a word added a word to bring out what he sees as the intent of all this and the word that he added is everyone all everyone who believes how can it be for all who believe because verse 12 there's no distinction we're done with this no distinction between Jew and Greek how can that be for the same Lord is Lord of all who bestows his riches on everyone who calls on him that's what it means to be God and we know that's so because one more time in verse 13 for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved another quote Joel chapter 2 verse 32 I don't think you can miss the point here that Paul's saying that well yes in a sense it's surprising that the Gentiles are being included now in the promises of God in the true Israel that not all Israel is in fact Israel we're learning that not all of Israel has pursued the righteousness of God by faith but the invitation from God to trust

Jesus Christ the Messiah the Jewish Messiah that that invitation to be part of God's covenant family is now given indiscriminately to all races and all nations and all religions and all cultures and by quoting from Isaiah and from Joel Paul's trying to show that once you catch on to the larger meaning of what God is doing through Israel that's not surprising at all because there's only one God Paul grounds the fact that salvation is available to all in monotheism one God that means there's only one way to salvation and that means it's for everyone because God's mercy is wide and expansive and inclusive and bountiful and accessible to every person and now one one last observation about this text if I can because the sermon title is after all

God's riches right like why isn't he talking about God's riches the title of the sermon well I didn't come up with the title for the sermon I don't really know where the titles come from they just show up in the bulletin seriously I don't write the titles for my sermon no one's ever asked me what I want to title my sermon so if you can figure out who it is that writes those titles let me know God's riches

but we'll end there because look at verse 12 I want this to encourage you for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for the same Lord is Lord of all and to be the Lord of all means that you bestow riches on all who call on you that you bestow your riches on all who call on you that's the goal of all this that's what God is doing for those who come by faith to Jesus Christ and call on him and confess that he is

Lord what are the riches not the earthly treasures of course not stuff it's not things it's not cars or boats or houses or investments or whatever it is that drives so many people in the world it's not riches like that it's riches that are things of course that ultimately satisfy the heart this is about the heart being changed the riches are the salvation that Paul talks about in verses 9 and 10 and 13 that were saved saved from what saved from guilt and from condemnation and from the wrath of God and from hell and saved from sinning and saved from giving your life to second rate pleasures for the rest of your days you don't have to do it anymore we're saved from all that verse 10 says we're justified that we believe into righteousness literally it says in the Greek we believe into righteousness that the righteousness that's held out for us in the law that's based on faith and is the grounds for God to declare us right in his sight that becomes ours as we see that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness that's richness verse 11 puts it this way that everyone who believes in the name of the Lord

[30 : 24] Jesus Christ will not be put to shame that's riches too that the riches of God include no shame that one day will be revealed as the children of God what we are there's plenty of shame now to be sure isn't there plenty of shame now that's alright Jesus told us there would be blessed are you and others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad they're shaming you be glad because your reward is great in heaven there will be no shame God will reverse our shame so welcome us and accept us as his children that's all included in what Paul means by riches surely but let me end with this that Paul may have in mind I think he does the terminology of riches very specifically because he's used it not that long ago in chapter 9 if you're able to look back if you have it open to chapter 9 in verse 23 it's there this is the end to which

God has elected and planned his universe it is for the revealing of the riches of his glory the riches of his glory the riches of who God is that the ultimate riches that God gives on any who call to him they're not just our right standing with God they're not just our salvation from guilt or condemnation or shame the ultimate riches of God are the riches of God they are the riches of who God is they are to see God to know God to enjoy God forever that the ultimate riches that God bestows on us when we believe in Jesus Christ as Lord is himself that he's done everything for you in Christ you don't have to earn his favor you don't have to climb up to some unknown height to pull God down to you you don't have to go down into the depths to draw God up to you you don't have to bring God to you God has done it so that if with your heart you believe that God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead as the Lord of all and in your mouth and in your life you confess him as Lord then he is yours you get him and then you will enjoy the life of God as you walk with him now as you walk with him now in this life and for time eternal thanks be to God in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen