

Mans Responsibility in Salvation

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in Romans, Romans chapter 10. Romans chapter 10, and we can read from verse 11.

For the scripture says, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame, for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now, there is no question whatever, but that the Bible teaches very clearly the great truth about human responsibility, in the way of salvation.

The Bible also teaches very clearly God's sovereignty in the way of salvation. Some people think that these are two opposites.

That man's responsibility and God's sovereignty are working in opposite directions. But as somebody very wisely said, that these two great truths, they do not compete with one another, but that they actually cooperate one with another.

[1 : 36] And even although there might be aspects to these great truths that we do not understand fully, that doesn't in any way take away from the fact that the Bible teaches very, very clearly the sovereignty of God in salvation, but it also teaches human responsibility in salvation.

Someone once came to Spurgeon, and this person, I don't know who it was, and challenged Spurgeon on this whole area of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

And this person said to Spurgeon, How can you reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in salvation?

And Spurgeon very wisely said, I never try or feel the need to reconcile friends. And that is, I thought, a very wise answer, because they are friends.

They work together. And that is what we find, if we were to read through chapter 9 and chapter 10, we find God, or Paul, teaching these great truths that have been given to him by God, of God's sovereignty and salvation, but also man's responsibility in salvation.

[3 : 02] Now, as we know, the Apostle Paul was a great missionary to the Gentiles, to the non-Jew. But while he was a great missionary to the Gentiles, he never lost a passion that the Jew also would come to faith in Jesus Christ.

But, of course, Paul saw that the great obstacle to the Jews coming to accept Christ as Savior was their determination to try and fulfill the law.

And he was seeing this, and so much of his writing is to try and say, Look, this is something you cannot do. We ourselves, by nature, we cannot fulfill the law.

But Paul had this burning desire that his own people, his own countrymen, his own, those who were his flesh and blood, as it were, by nature, that they would be saved.

We read about his passion for it at the very beginning of the chapter. Brothers, he says, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them, that is, for the Jews, is that they may be saved.

[4:11] And it's a wonderful, you can just see the tremendous passion in his heart. And I would hope that every believer in here tonight would have something of that passion in their heart for the salvation of souls.

This morning we were looking at that great statement, I love the Lord. And we were looking at different ways of how we understand that, I love the Lord. And that was one of the things that we saw, that when we have come to know the Lord, that we in turn want others to know the Lord as well.

That's how love works. Love is action. Love cannot keep something to oneself. Love doesn't work like that. Love is all about giving.

When you read that great chapter in 1 Corinthians 13, it says, it tells us that the greatest of these is love.

And as we saw, love is about giving. Love is active. Love is action. Love is demonstrative. And so when we come to know Christ as Savior, then it is obvious that we want to tell others the great and wonderful news.

[5:30] And I hope that you tonight have a heart for those who are outside Christ, that they will come to receive Jesus as Savior. I hope that you do not just say, Oh, well, it's up to the Lord and I can't do anything about it.

I would hope that you have a passion, a desire. I hope you pray. I hope I pray for this nation that you belong to, that you're part of. Yes, we pray for the nations of this world.

We pray for peoples that we've never met. We pray for countries that we may not know one person from that country. But that still doesn't stop us praying for them.

And we should be touched in our heart when we read and when we hear about other countries and the work of the gospel in these countries. And there ought to be a missionary zeal in the heart of every believer that God's gospel would flourish and grow and prosper in other lands.

But we must never lose sight and never lose a passion for our own nation, for our own country. You remember John Knox, that great reformer? His cry was, Give me Scotland or I die.

[6:42] That was the kind of passion, the heart, the fervor that was in him. And I'm afraid so often that maybe we've lost something of that passion, of that desire.

And so we see the importance of the spread and the message of the gospel going out to all. Paul is showing that, the importance of preaching the word.

He's saying, How will people believe? How can people believe in a Christ that they have not heard of? He's wanting that people will believe.

But they cannot believe unless they're told. And he's showing the importance of spreading the word, of reaching people with the word. And that is why every believer is a missionary.

And I believe it's one of the most effective forms of evangelism. It's when God's people, in whatever place God has placed you, will share the gospel.

[7:42] Whether it is in your home, in your work, in your neighborhood, in your friendships, in your leisure, in all the different places, in all the different points of contact, you are given opportunities to reach people that no organized, structured work could ever reach.

You have opportunities. And that is how the New Testament church grew. It was through the believers reaching out with the gospel, sharing the gospel.

We have great privileges. We have great opportunities. We have also great responsibilities that one day we're all going to have to give an account for. You read the parable of the talents and of how the Lord, who had given and bestowed different talents and gifts, that came the day of reckoning, the day of requirement, the day of giving the account.

What have you done with the privileges, the opportunities that I've given you? The Lord is going to ask us about these things. Remember, we've been saved to serve.

We haven't been saved simply to come and attend church and then put our life into little compartments and say, well, this is Sunday and I will come to church and I'll worship there the rest of the week.

[9 : 00] I'm so involved in other things. The Lord doesn't look on it like that. We have our places. We have our responsibilities and we must never lose sight of that.

And the apostle never lost sight of that. And so we have to tell people and share. That's why Jesus himself told us to go into all the world and to preach the great news, the wonderful news, that Jesus Christ is Savior.

But of course, the apostle Paul, as we said here, is realizing that the Jew faced a huge problem. And that was because of their misunderstanding of the law.

They tried to keep the law. And they tried to keep the law outwardly. And their belief was that if they adhered to the law and kept the law, then they would please God.

And that is why they added to the law hundreds of other laws, just to make sure that they were absolutely keeping to the letter of the law. So that there wouldn't be any error or mistake.

[10 : 11] And they created an incredibly burdensome system. What they were forgetting was that they were breaking the law inwardly.

They weren't looking or making a place for the breaking of the law inside, inwardly in the heart. And you know, that is the problem with an awful lot of people even today.

There are a lot of people who look at their life and they try to live upright lives, morally correct lives, good lives.

And they do at an outward level. There are many people and you look at their life and their life at a human level is blameless. They are exemplary people, exemplary citizens, exemplary neighbors.

And you look at their life and you say, you know, that is a really fine life. Looking at it, I cannot see anything wrong with that life. In fact, it's a life that is lived to such a high level and at such a high standard that you may say to yourself, that person's life is so much better than mine.

[11 : 22] But that's it at the outward level. You see, what we haven't taken into account is the inward. And God is looking at our heart. Not just at our outward actions, but at our heart.

Because as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The real you, the real me is what's inside there. And God is reading that open book all the time.

And that's what the Jews haven't taken account of. And that's what so many people to this very day haven't taken account of. And so this was a problem for the Jews that when they were looking to, they were, you see, the law was given.

The law is the schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. But unfortunately, they look to the law as being the way of salvation by trying to keep the law.

And that is one of the biggest problems and one of the biggest difficulties even to this day that people face. And if there's anybody in here today who is trying to make themselves right with God simply by living the best way that you can, remember, the Bible says it's not just by our outward actions that we'll be judged.

[12 : 50] Every thought, every word, every deed. And we are always coming short of the glory of God. That's what sin is.

It's a coming short of the glory of God. And we have all sinned. Every single one of us. And as soon as we sin, we are condemned. The law of God condemns.

And of course, that is why the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world. Now, of course, the whole Jewish religious system pointed to the Messiah.

The whole temple structure of the priesthood, the sacrifices, the festivals, everything was to point to Jesus Christ. The law told them that they needed a Savior.

But as we said, instead of the law leading them to Christ, they began to worship the law and make a God of the law.

[13:50] And that's what Paul is at pains, trying to show them. That rather than saving them, the law is actually condemning them.

And that's the truth that needs to be taught. And the truth that you and I have to take hold of. And so the apostle goes on then and he says, For the scripture says that everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

Isn't that wonderful? Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. Now, shame is, I think, one of the most awful things in this world.

I suppose we've all, at different levels, at different times, been ashamed. Ashamed of things we've said. Ashamed of things we've done.

And if we're honest, ashamed of things we've thought. Shame is an awful thing. But sometimes I think we forget this. One of the things that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to deal with is the shame of sin.

[15:10] Because sin brings shame. When Adam and Eve sinned, they felt ashamed. They had never known shame before.

And they were ashamed because they were naked. But you know, the greatest nakedness of all was not their physical nakedness, but their spiritual nakedness.

Where they began to see that they had offended a holy God. They couldn't bear to stand in his presence. When God came into the garden, as he did in the cool of the day, they had to run away.

Because they were ashamed. Sin brings shame. And that's what Jesus bore on the cross.

Because he bore our guilt. Guilt and shame are tied together. When you feel guilty, you feel ashamed. And you know, that is part of the awfulness of hell.

[16:09] That it is eternal shame. Can you imagine that? Think back to times when you've been ashamed. Imagine experiencing that eternally. Eternal shame.

Well, Jesus has come to bear. And he has borne our guilt upon himself. And if we have Jesus Christ as our Savior, then we need never be ashamed.

There will be no eternal shame. It will be removed. In fact, all our sin will be removed. So that throughout an endless eternity, we won't even remember our sin.

God isn't going to remember it. Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. Isn't that extraordinary? Wipe the slate clean.

As far as east is distant from the west, so far hath he removed our sin. Isn't that extraordinary? You can't get further than east from west.

[17:13] He has cast our sins into the depths of the sea. Not just into the sea, but like into the deepest part of the sea. As if it will never be found again.

And because our sin has been wiped clean, then there will be no guilt, and there will be no shame. And that's what we read here. For everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

And it's here we see this, the wonderful freedom and the wonderful liberty. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. Now you see, before in the early days, at the time of Paul, there was a great distinction between the Jew and the Greek.

Before Paul was converted, in fact, he really looked down on the non-Jew. He looked down on the Gentiles. He looked down on them as dogs. To him there was a massive distinction.

There were the Jews and there was everybody else. But Paul is saying now, no, that's not how it is. All these distinctions have gone.

[18:24] There are no barriers. All one, in Christ Jesus. All the barriers of race, of sex, of culture, of creed, of language.

All these things have been removed so that everybody is one in Christ Jesus. And then we have this wonderful declaration.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. See, prior to that it says, for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

Isn't that wonderful? Here are the riches, my friend, that we must seek. There are many people tonight and they've spent their life seeking earthly riches.

Now, don't get me wrong. We are to work. We are to... The Lord doesn't say to us that we aren't to try and work for our money.

[19:31] That it's wrong to save up. That's not what is being said here. But there are riches, we've got to remember, that surpass any riches that this world can give.

The riches of this world, remember, they're temporary. It doesn't matter how long you live, it's only for a little while. And there's another part, the Lord is speaking about these things.

And he said, you know, some people try and store up riches. They try and store up wealth. They try and store up things of worth. But he says, remember this, that these things, moths can get to them.

Rust can get to them. Corruption will get to them. And maybe in today's terms, it might be different. People can get their money wiped out. We're living in a time where there is great insecurity about money matters.

And I'm sure there are many people who are very concerned. Because people might see that their value of what they have all of a sudden is plummeting. These things can happen at a global level.

[20:37] And I'm sure that there have been many people in the history of this world who have been distraught because they've lost everything in this world. In monetary matters or in possession. And Jesus is saying, this is what I'm trying to teach you.

Don't lay all your store upon what this world gives. Remember there are riches that are eternal. Where your heart is.

Where your riches lie, that's where your heart is. The riches that are eternal can never be invaded by any enemy, by any moth, by any corruption.

By any rust. These are the riches that the Lord gives. The riches of His grace. The riches of His love. The riches of His peace. These are wonderful things.

Oh, my friend in Jesus Christ, you may not have much of this world, but if you have the riches in Christ, then you have everything. You are a rich person.

[21:39] And of course, then there's that great declaration that these riches belong to all who call on Him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. When it says here, the name of the Lord, that is indicating the passion and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, all that He is.

Remember His name. His name shall be called Jesus. Why? For He shall save His people from their sins.

Isn't that wonderful? That's why He came into this world. The name of Jesus was given to Mary before Jesus was born. Mary wasn't going to have to look and wonder, I wonder what name I will give my baby when He is born into this world.

Mary was told that the child she was carrying was indeed the Son of God in human nature. And she was told what His name was to be.

[22 : 47] His name, you are going to call Him Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins. Isn't that wonderful? That's why Jesus came into this world. And so we see the extent, the largeness of this offer.

Everyone or anyone whoever calls upon the name of the Lord. Isn't that wonderful? And it's here we come to see the responsibility, human responsibility.

you must call. Do you tonight, let me say this, do you tonight in here, if you are not somebody who is saved, do you believe what the Word of God says?

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners? do you believe that He is able to save you?

Do you believe that if you call on Him that you will be saved? Do you believe these things? Well, if you do, my friend, is it not folly to remain silent?

[24 : 04] Is it not folly in the silence of your heart not to cry to Him? Because the Word of God says, if we neglect so great salvation, how will we escape?

How can anyone escape if we neglect so great salvation? Here is this great salvation. It's held out to us in the Gospel. If you believe it to be true, and you don't call out to the Lord, you, my dear friend, will be held responsible for your silence, for your non-seeking, for your non-involvement in what the Scripture is holding out to you.

Tonight, Satan may come to you and whisper all sorts of things to you. He may say that there are clauses and there are conditions to this. He may be whispering to you, I'll go back to chapter 9 there and read all about God's sovereignty.

Well, tonight, let us focus upon human responsibility and see so clearly in black and white from the mouth of God. It says, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Not might be saved, not there's a possibility that could be saved, but will be saved. It can't be clearer than that. So, when you look at it and you say, well, where are the clauses?

[25 : 32] Where are the conditions of Satan's whispering these things to you? It is showing here that the responsibility tonight is in your court.

You are to call upon the name of the Lord. Will you? I believe you believe this to be true, but will you call upon his name?

Will you seek him? Doesn't matter. You may be saying to yourself, oh, well, I've left it a bit late in the day. The day of opportunity for me maybe is over.

Does it? I don't see it saying that there. Maybe you're saying, oh, if you knew my past life, if you knew the kind of person I was. Doesn't say anything about that there.

Maybe you're saying to yourself, oh, well, I've had, I was brought up in a good home and for years I turned my back upon what I was taught, but, but okay, I've had a few thoughts about it now, but I don't think, doesn't say anything about that.

[26 : 40] It says, whosoever, everyone, or anyone, that's what it's saying. And there are many people in here tonight who could stand up and they'll give their amen to this.

They will say, this is true. They will say, I once was blind, but now I see. I once was lost, but now I'm found.

I once was in darkness, but now I'm in light. I was once confused about it all, but now it's clear. How did that happen?

The Lord opened my eyes. The Lord saved me. And we are commanded to call. Oh, won't you call? I don't want anybody to go out of here tonight and say, oh, well, I'll leave it, I'll leave it to some other time.

I'm going to hide behind that, that great doctrine of God's responsibility, of God's sovereignty. Doesn't it teach there about election? Well, do you know what the Bible says to you and to me about election?

[27 : 53] It says, make your calling and election sure. You make it sure. How? By calling upon the Lord, by seeking Him.

You see, the Lord doesn't leave us with any excuses. And He's saying, look, this salvation is here for the asking. This salvation is offered through the reading and the preaching of the Word.

Tonight, you are under the reading and the preaching of the Word. Tonight, you're being offered this salvation. What are you going to do with it? What is to be your response? Remember, one day, you will have to give an account for what you've done.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we pray that this gospel offer may indeed challenge us.

We pray that we might not turn away from it because the Word makes it so clear. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

[28 : 57] O Lord, help us then to look to Jesus, to believe in Jesus, to accept Jesus as Lord of our life. Bless each one of us, we pray. Do us good and take us home safely.

In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen.