

Romans
Human Responsibility (Part 3)
Romans 9:30 – 10:21
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Every honest person who understands anything about the Bible acknowledges two unchangeable realities. The first of those realities is that God, in His eternal person, is inherently righteous, and He requires righteousness of all of those who will enter His presence; that is an unchangeable reality. It's presented throughout the Scripture from cover, literally to cover. Maybe it's said well and, for our purposes, best in Psalm 11, verse 7, where the Psalmist writes, "the LORD is righteous, (that is His inherent, personal righteousness, and) He loves righteousness; (That is, He loves righteousness in all of those who would draw near to Him. And then it says this.) The upright will behold his face. (And the verse before it, verse 6, says,) Upon the wicked He will rain...(coals of fire) fire and brimstone." There are the two options. God is inherently righteous, and He demands that all who approach Him be righteous. And for those who are righteous, He receives them; and for those who are not, He sends them into eternal punishment and destruction. That is the message of the Bible. That is an unchangeable reality.

Unfortunately, there is a second unchangeable reality that makes our lives extremely complicated because the second reality is that, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, (NO) NOT...ONE," Romans 3:10. So God is inherently righteous, and He demands righteousness of

all who will enter His presence, but not one of us is righteous in the sight of God. That is the great puzzle of the Bible; that is the great enigma that has to be resolved.

Once you understand those two unchangeable realities, you begin to search for a righteousness that will somehow enable you to stand in God's presence. And when you begin that search, you soon discover that there are only two possible options. So when it comes to **that** irreconcilable set of realities, God is righteous, demands righteousness of those would enter His presence, we are not; when you seek to solve that, there are only two paths you can try, only two.

All religion is reduced to these two basic attempts or options. One is, you can try to establish your own righteousness before God by your personal merit, your good works, and your religious performance, and the world is filled with people who are attempting to do just that. But unfortunately, however sincere, however well-intentioned, that fails miserably; it falls short of the glory of God because Isaiah says in Isaiah 64:6 that, “all our righteous deeds are like filthy garment(s in God's sight.)” Notice he doesn't say “all our sins.” that goes without saying, right? He says “our righteous deeds.” Think for a moment about the top ten things that appear righteous you have ever done. In God's sight, they were filthy; that's what the writer says. So that approach will not get you to God.

The second possible option, the only other way to try to bridge that gap between those two great realities, the only other way to try to gain righteousness before God is to receive it from Him as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Those are the only two options. Paul deals with those

two diametrically opposed ways of trying to gain a right standing before God here in Romans, chapter 10.

Now let me remind you of the context. We're studying the third great section of Paul's letter, chapters 9 through 11. Here I've entitled the section, "The Gospel Defended: Election, Israel, and God's Promises." He has, in the earlier chapters, explained the gospel; he has even applied the gospel in chapters 5 through 8; but now in chapters 9 through 11, he is defending that gospel because it could appear, based on the failure of so many of God's people to believe, like the gospel had somehow an inherent deficiency.

So Paul answers one great question in these three chapters, "Why have so many of God's chosen people, Israel, rejected their Messiah and His gospel?" And he gives us three answers to that question. His first answer we studied at great length, and it is, "The Reality of Divine Election." That begins in Romans, chapter 9, verse 6, and runs down through verse 29.

We are now studying Paul's second answer to that question, and it is, "The Reality of Human Responsibility." This section begins in chapter 9, verse 30, and runs through the end of chapter 10; chapter 10, verse 21. And the point of this section is when people hear but don't believe, that is believe in Jesus, believe in His gospel, including the Jewish people, they are personally responsible. When people hear the gospel and don't respond, they are personally responsible for

that rejection. Now, what are the primary factors that contribute to both the Jewish and frankly to other religious people's responsibility for not believing the gospel?

Last time, we looked at the first of those factors, those primary factors, and that is, it's caused by a failure to understand the purpose of God's Law, chapter 9, verses 30 to 33. They just don't get it. They think God's Law is about earning their way into God's favor, and that fails miserably; so they have misunderstood that God's Law is intended to, Galatians 3, drive us to Christ. And instead they think it's a way to earn their way into God's favor.

Today we come to a second primary factor that contributes to both Jewish and frankly all human responsibility for not believing the gospel once you hear that gospel. And it's this, an unwillingness to accept salvation by faith alone. That is what Paul addresses in chapter 10, verses 1 through 15. We just read it a moment ago. Now this morning, **we're** not going to be able to look at all 15 of those verses; my goal is to look at the first four, so let's read them together.

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Jews, Paul says, were unwilling to accept faith alone, in Christ alone, as the only way to be right with God. And the reason for their refusal was an abysmal ignorance of faith, an abysmal

ignorance of the importance of and the reality of faith. And that's what Paul is saying in these first four verses. In this brief paragraph, Paul mentions **this** profound ignorance twice. Notice verse 2, “not in accordance with knowledge.” Their zeal is not in keeping with knowledge; they don't have sufficient knowledge. In verse 3, “not knowing about God's righteousness.”

Now, the problem is an ignorance, an ignorance of the way of faith, the means of faith by which we gain righteousness with God. And Paul begins, not with the cause of their ignorance, but with the result of this ignorance of faith in verse 1; notice verse 1, “Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” Paul says they had not experienced spiritual salvation; they were still dead in their sins, and it was this reality that prompted Paul in both his concern and his prayer.

By the way, these three chapters are permeated with that concern. You'll remember how he started chapter 9; go back to chapter 9, verse 1.

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh who are Israelites.

He comes back to this same expression of concern in chapter 11, verse 1, “I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! (Because) I too am an Israelite.” And he goes on to talk about his passion for his people. This is exactly how he begins chapter 10. Look at it with me, chapter 10, verse 1. He begins, “Brethren.” Now first of all, understand that this

is how Paul, with this word, how he often switches from one topic to another, or as he does here, from one part of a topic to another part of the same topic. It's also Paul's familiar way to address his fellow Christians. In this case the word 'brethren' is not talking about **his** Jewish brethren; rather, he's talking about his Christian brothers and sisters in the churches in Rome. And he says to them, "Brethren."

Now, I'm not **going** to spend a lot of time here, but I want to pause just a moment even though this is not Paul's primary point. I think he says this so often, and we become so accustomed to it that it loses its impact. Folks, there is a powerful reminder here for all of us. "Brethren," if you're a Christian, if you claim Christ, look around you in this room. These are not merely fellow spectators at an event that is intended for you and your benefit. No! These are your brothers and sisters in Christ! That's not just a nice expression; that's a reality. God has adopted them just as He has adopted you. They are part of your family. Jesus said, when His mother and brother showed up outside the house where He was teaching in Capernaum, we saw it over the last couple weeks, He said, as he pointed to His disciples gathered around His feet, "These are my mother and my brother and my sisters, those who hear the word of God and obey it." These are your brothers and sisters. If you don't genuinely love them, John the Apostle says, and I'll put it bluntly as he does, "You're not a Christian." You can't love Christ and not love His bride; it's impossible! And if you are a Christian, and your life is not truly about loving and serving your Christian brothers and sisters, if you are happy to show up week after week and sit in the seat, and get what you can get out of it, and then run for the doors, and that's the extent of your involvement, understand this, again, I'll put it as bluntly as John the Apostle does, "You are being a selfish and disobedient Christian." These are your brothers and sisters, and Paul, he

thought of other Christians as brothers and sisters, and he treated them that way even those he had never met like those in Rome. Do you, do you?

So verse 1, “Brethren, my heart’s desire.” The Greek word for ‘desire’ refers to ‘a wish or a desire that's directed towards something that's good that causes you joy and satisfaction.’ It was the desire of his heart, that is, of his entire inner self, to see his fellow Jews come to know Christ. He wanted the primarily Gentile churches in Rome to know that he remained passionate about the salvation of his fellow Jews. So passionate, verse 1 says, “Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them.” Here's how his desire manifested itself, “in prayer for them.” And the word for ‘prayer’ is, in this case, a word specifically for a ‘petition or request.’ My desire and my request for them, you know, here we see the apostle’s great heart, his great love; remember who he’s talking about? These were his worst enemies on the planet. Read the book of Acts, read what he writes even in 2 Corinthians as he details the persecutions that he faced. They're the ones who were doing this to him and yet he says for them, in spite of all that, in spite of how badly they treated him, verse 1, “my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.”

I like the way J.B. Phillips paraphrases this in his translation/paraphrase. He says, “My brothers, from the bottom of my heart, I long and pray to God that Israel may be saved.” That’s what Paul is saying. But notice the focus of his prayer in verse 1, was their spiritual rescue, their salvation. Now don't miss what this means. Don't miss the big point Paul is making. As a result of their ignorance on this issue, they had not experienced God's salvation. In the words of Ephesians 2, “They were still dead in their sins, enslaved to the mindset of the age, enslaved to

Satan and even to their own lusts,” (paraphrased) as Paul says he had been before Christ. And by nature, (Cough-excuse me) again, according to Ephesians 2, instead of being children of God, they were children of Satan or as Paul puts it there, “children of God's wrath.” That was their relationship to God all because of this ignorance. So Paul passionately desired and faithfully asked God to save them.

You know, there are some powerful points of application in verse 1. The first one and the most important one is, do you understand what Paul is saying is not enough to save you? If you tracked your way through the book of Romans, and you listed all of the Jewish advantages and accomplishments, you would learn those things that are never enough to make you right with God.

Let me just give you a little list. I’m not going to take you through the book, let me just give you list. Here's what's not enough; see how you do on this checklist. They had belief in the one true God; the Jewish people had belief in the one true God. Secondly, they had an initiatory ceremony, in their case, circumcision. A lot of professing Christians put their confidence in a different kind of initiatory ceremony, baptism. They had an attachment to God's people; they had a possession of and a knowledge of the right Scripture; they had a public confession of belonging to the true God. Everybody in their community knew they belonged to the God of Israel. They were regular in their attendance and the corporate worship. Every Sabbath, they gathered to worship God. They had an externally righteous life, and they had a fervent, sincere zeal for God and for spiritual things. The Jews could check every one of those boxes, and yet Paul says they still needed to be saved. So, can you check every one of those boxes? If that's all

you've got, it's not enough. That's what Paul says, "It's not enough." If your own confidence is in one or more of those things as your hope of heaven, you are not saved as they were not saved.

There's a second application point for us in verse 1, and that is that we, as believers, should follow Paul's example and earnestly desire and therefore pray for the salvation of those we love. If we're not praying, then we can't honestly say we desire their salvation; the two go together. There's also a crucial theological point that Paul makes in verse 1, and he makes it in passing. It's this; divine election is not incompatible with evangelistic praying and **evangelistic** missionary zeal.

Now think about this, Paul has just taken an entire chapter, chapter 9, **to** explain divine election, and **that** is in part why so few Jews have believed in their Messiah. But now, just a couple of verses later, he writes that he desired and prayed for their salvation; and of course, there was never anyone better at acting out on those prayers and bringing **the** gospel to people than the Apostle Paul.

You see, divine sovereignty is, in reality, the only reasonable basis for praying for the salvation of others. In fact, if I can be a little cheeky and say it, every time you ask God to save someone, you are admitting that you are a closet Calvinist because what you're really saying is, "It's not in their power to do; God it's in your power alone to do; please save them." Paul didn't see an incompatibility between these at all; and if you don't see that compatibility, if you don't understand the relationship of sovereignty and evangelistic praying and evangelism, then let me encourage you to read a classic by J.I. Packer called Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.

While we wouldn't agree with him on everything that he later wrote or did, that is a classic book that I commend to you. So the result of an ignorance of faith means no salvation, no salvation.

Now next, Paul provides the analysis that is of this ignorance of faith. He analyzes it for us and let's just see what it really is in verses 2 through 4, let's look at it together. Verse 2, "For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God." The Greek word for 'zeal' refers to 'an intense, positive interest in something, marked by dedication to get it done,' an intense positive interest marked by dedication. So here, this is zeal for God describes an intense devotion to God and all of the things that are important to Him. Such zeal is often praised in the New Testament. In John 2:17, of Jesus, we read this, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." In Acts 21:20, of Jewish believers, it says, "thousands...(of) Jews...have believed, and they are all zealous for... (God's) Law." In Acts 22:3, of Paul, Paul says, "I am a Jew...zealous for God." In 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2, of Paul's concern for the Corinthian believers, we read this, "I am zealous (over) you with a godly (zeal)." Paul says, "I can tell you, I can testify, in other words, I can give firsthand testimony, and am giving it to the fact that they are zealous for God." Paul was in a unique position to give this testimony that the Jewish

people have a genuine zeal for God. He felt it after his conversion, right? He endured it in many different ways. Again, read the testimony of what he faced in 2 Corinthians.

But also, he could testify to their zeal; because before Christ, as a Pharisee, he exhibited that zeal as a nonbelieving, non-saved Jewish person. Look back at Acts 26; he describes it here in Acts 26. Look at verse 9 as he gives his testimony before Agrippa, Acts 26:9:

So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, (Now think about this, Paul actually did these things in zeal for God.) not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; (You can only imagine the techniques and methods that were used to force first century Christians to blaspheme Christ.) and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

Galatians, chapter 1, verse 13, Paul continues to talk about this zeal that he had as a Jewish person for God, Galatians 1, verse 13.

For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen.

Paul says, “I was more zealous than all of them or most of them.” And he says it this way, “being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.” So Paul says, “Listen, I can tell you

from first-hand experience, before my conversion and after my conversion at the receiving end of it, the Jews are zealous for God.”

But there was a fatal flaw in their zeal. Look at verse 2, Romans 10:2, “For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, (Notice this.) but not in accordance with knowledge.” Their zeal wasn't matched by knowledge. Now the Greek word that he chooses for ‘knowledge’ here is often describing practical knowledge as opposed to purely theoretical knowledge. Because the problem wasn't that the Jewish people had no knowledge of the Old Testament or of God's will, they certainly did, but they lacked the applicational, practical knowledge of how that truth applied to them, especially as we will see in verse 3, when it came to how they could be made right with God. They were ignorant of this reality.

Now, let me just say that, again, there is a crucial point for us here. In today's Christian world, zeal is often valued far more than knowledge. Ironically, for example, I would say to you, even some Christians with good theology will attend, for example, a charismatic church and be tempted to be impressed by the zeal of their worship, as if zeal is of greater value than knowledge. Here, Paul reminds us that people can be extremely zealous for the true God and not even be redeemed.

As John Calvin wrote, “It is better, as Augustine says, to limp in the right way than to run with all of our might out of the way.” In other words, it's a lot better to limp in the truth, than it is to be zealous in error. What knowledge did the Jews, and often other religious people, lack? What was this lack of knowledge? Verse 3, “For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking

to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” Notice Paul says, “They did not know God's righteousness; they didn't know about God's righteousness.” Now, immediately what's clear? It's clear Paul is not talking about the attribute of God whereby God is inherently righteous in His own person. They knew that! **That's** all through their Scriptures; I just shared an example with you a few minutes ago. So he's not talking here about that. The Jews knew that God was a righteous God.

Instead, he's using this expression, “God's righteousness or the righteousness of God,” as he has used it throughout this letter already. Let me remind you of how Paul has used this expression so far. Go back to Romans, chapter 1; Romans, chapter 1, verse 16. After a brief introduction, Paul introduces his theme, the theme of this letter in verses 16 and 17, and this is what he writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, (So **this** letter is about the gospel of God.) I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation (spiritual rescue) to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Now watch verse 17, “For in it (That is in the gospel.) the righteousness of God (God's righteousness is revealed. What are you talking about, Paul? Well, it's a kind of righteousness, that) is...from faith to faith.” It begins with faith and ends with faith. That's a way of saying it's entirely of faith from beginning to end, so Paul says, “I'm talking about, in this letter, the gospel, and at the heart of the gospel is God's righteousness which is entirely of faith from beginning to end.” Now that begins to lay the foundation.

But then, beginning in verse 18 of chapter 1, Paul shows us the need for the gospel, and he first speaks about **the** pagan who doesn't have any clue **of** the revelation of God except in general

revelation in the creation; he doesn't have the Bible; he doesn't have the Scripture. He ought to know about God simply from the creation, he says. Then in chapter 2, he comes to the Jews, **and** he indicts them and all religious people who have some connection to the true God for their lack of trust in the gospel. Chapter 3, he talks about all men as being guilty before God, beginning in verse 9, running down to verse 20.

Now, he finally comes back to the message of the gospel in chapter 3, verse 21; turn there with me. Here's the gospel. So this is **picking** up, if you will, where verse 17 of chapter 1 left off. He's proved the need for the gospel, and now here's the gospel itself. But now apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested. So what I'm saying to you isn't, this kind of righteousness doesn't come by obedience to the law, but it was witnessed by the Old Testament. **You** find evidence of **this** way in the Law and the Prophets. What am I talking about? What is this righteousness of God? Verse 22:

...even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe; for there is no distinction; ...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Now watch verse 24, "being justified," receiving a right standing before God, that's the righteousness we're talking about. It's the righteousness which has its source in God; how do I get it? Through faith in Jesus Christ! And then he clarifies it even more in verse 24, **we** receive this righteousness, we are "justified, (We are declared right with God.) as a gift, (You don't earn

it; **it's** a free gift that's given.) by His grace.” **It's** solely God's doing. And how could God do this? “Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

Go over to chapter 4, verse 3, he gives an Old Testament example, two of them actually, one of Abraham and one of David. Notice verse 3 of Abraham:

For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Now to the one who works, his wages is not credited as a favor, but...what is (owed). (But here's how you're made right with God; here's how you get this righteousness that is God's righteousness), ...to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man (Notice this expression.) to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.

That is a definition of God's righteousness in the book of Romans. That's what Paul's talking about back in chapter 10.

Go back there with me. The righteousness of God is God's gift of righteousness or God's gift of a right standing before Him, and you receive that gift by faith in Jesus Christ. Even here in the context of our passage, Paul uses this expression in the same way. Look at chapter 10, verse 6, he speaks of the “righteousness based on faith.” We will see that, Lord willing, next Sunday.

You see, zealous, religious people are often ignorant of God's gift of righteousness. They’re often ignorant of how a person is made right with God; that means by the way, that they are also ignorant of the character of God; they don't see God as is holy as He is. They’re also ignorant of

the true requirements of His Law because they think they can keep it well enough to satisfy Him. And they're also ignorant of their own sinful hearts because they think they're better than they are. So there's a whole lot of ignorance going around.

Now this problem of an ignorance of God's righteousness is still very much alive and well in the 21st century and in North Texas. There are faiths in our world that zealously worship the true God, just like the first century Jews did, but lack this knowledge of God's righteousness.

Certainly modern-day Judaism would be an example of that. Roman Catholicism would be another example of that. The Church of Christ is an example of that; many of the Churches of Christ embrace baptismal regeneration. There are also many well-known cults that are attached to Christianity that lack this knowledge of God's righteousness, and they also have at least one additional damning flaw. They're either wrong about the person of Jesus, or they're wrong about the Scripture; talking about cults like Mormonism, the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Sadly, this same ignorance about the gift of God's righteousness can be found in people sitting in churches just like this one where the true gospel is taught. Why? Because we are inherently self-righteous; we are born self-righteous; and even after we come to faith in Christ, we keep trying to make it somehow about us. As Spurgeon said, "Even though we understand we can't earn our way to heaven, (If you're a true Christian you understand that.) we just want to have a small part in the last mile; that's all we want."

But folks, if we could earn our way into God's favor, if you could earn your way into God's favor, then why in the world did God send His Son and put Him through the cross? It's

irrational! What that means, what the cross means, is it is impossible. That other option is impossible.

Now this failure to understand God's righteousness is always intimately related to another fatal flaw, and Paul touches on it in verse 3. The first flaw is not knowing about God's righteousness, and here's number two, "Seeking to establish their own." They always go together. When you don't understand God's gift of righteousness, you're only left with the other option, and that's what you pursue, and that's what they did. They were, notice, continually seeking. That word 'seeking' is a word which means, 'to devote oneself with serious effort, to strive for.' And what were they devoting themselves with serious effort to? To establish, or literally, to set up their own righteousness! What is "their own?" Well, "their own" implies that they themselves are the source of this righteousness instead of God.

Remember, you've got God's righteousness. Now you've got "their own" righteousness. So how did the Jews and how do religious people today seek to set up or establish their own righteousness? It's very simple. All it means is that you try to earn your own right standing before God based on your efforts, your obedience, your merit, anything with "your" attached. It is a righteousness that comes from your own efforts; it is self-righteousness, and this is a fatal flaw.

Notice Romans, chapter 9. He ends verse 30 by talking about the righteousness which is of faith, "which is by faith" or out of faith; there's the one approach. But Israel, they instead pursued "a law of righteousness," that is righteousness based on law keeping. It was their own

righteousness. Verse 32, "...they did not pursue righteousness by faith, but as though it were by works." This is the problem.

Look at Galatians, chapter 2, verse 16; Galatians 2, verse 16, "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified (is not made right with God, doesn't receive a right standing before God) by the works of the Law (That is by keeping the Law.) but through faith in (Messiah) Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." It's like, Paul, how many different ways do you have to say it for us to understand it?

And here's the problem with seeking to be justified by the Law. Look down at chapter 3 of Galatians, verse 10, "For as many as are of (that is who rely on) the works of the Law, (they're) under a curse; for it's written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.'"

Look, if you want the option of pursuing your own righteousness, you have a serious problem because that requires complete obedience to every command, not just a few, not just the ones that fit your personality, but all of them, and that brings you right now under a curse. Verse 11, "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Paul, in Philippians, chapter 3, documents these two different approaches, and he says, "Before I came to Christ, I was taking option one, and I was striving after it with all my heart."

Philippians, chapter 3, verse 3, he says, true believers “glory in Christ Jesus (That's where our confidence is.) and (we) put no confidence in the flesh, (that is in ourselves, in our own righteousness).” And he says, “But look, **if** you want to establish a checklist **of** righteousness? I'm in! Here's my list,” and he begins to document it. He says, “If you want confidence it that, **I'll** out do you. I've got more.” And he gives a list, beginning in verse 5, of all of his achievements, all of his advantages. And then he says:

But (verse 7) whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish.

Skubalon-it's the most polite word for excrement that you can use. That's what he says, “**It's** excrement to me.” And then he says this, verse 9, notice the contrast again just like in Romans. He says, “(I want to) be found in (Christ, and here's the option I don't want) not having a righteousness of my own derived from (my keeping of) the Law. (I don't want that. Rather what I want is that) righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” Those are the two options.

Now go back to Romans, chapter 10, and look again at verse 3, “For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” In the case of the Jews and all who have the Scripture, this ignorance of the way of salvation is not because of lack of information; it is a culpable ignorance, and he's going to show that in the rest of chapter 10. It's self-imposed; if you have the Scripture, you

know this is God's way. It's not enough to know about the way of salvation, you have to, notice what he says, "Subject yourself to it."

How do you subject yourself to the gospel? You accept it as God's Word to you; you're willing to turn from your sins. In fact, as one of the reformers put it, the first step to obtaining **the** righteousness of God is to renounce your own righteousness. Not only do I not have enough righteousness to earn my way in your favor; all I've got is sin. And then you have to put your complete confidence in the life and death of Jesus Christ. That's the message of the gospel.

Sadly, most religious people refuse God's gift of righteousness and desperately try to establish their own; but to do so, is to desperately misunderstand what Christ has accomplished. Verse 4, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Now, we may come back to this verse, but for today, let me just summarize Paul's meaning. He says, "Christ is the end (He's the terminus, He's the termination for the law.) to everyone who believes (in Him)." He doesn't mean in every sense, doesn't mean we don't have to obey God's basic moral law anymore. He means Christ is the end of the law, the termination of the law, in this sense only, for everyone who believes in Christ, the law has been terminated as a way to gain a right standing before God because Christ has earned that standing for us with His life and with His death. As Charles Hodge puts it, "We are no longer under the system which says, 'Do this and

live,' but under that which says, 'Believe and you will be saved.'" Christ is the end of the law as a way to earn righteousness with God.

Now very quickly, let me just give you a few ways we should respond to what we've learned.

Number one, examine yourself. Ask yourself this question, "Do I understand the biblical means of salvation, and have I submitted myself to the gift of God's righteousness, by faith alone, in Christ alone? Or, am I still trusting in my own righteousness in some way?" If you're trusting in yourself, in anything you are or have done, then you are not saved. The only truly redeemed are those whose righteousness is in Christ alone.

Number two, admit the true spiritual condition of all those who lack the knowledge of God's way of salvation or who have refused to submit to it. What I mean by that is admit they are lost;

they need to be saved even if they are religious and zealous or, in North Texas terms, “just good people.” It doesn’t matter, they need to be saved.

So, number three, desire and pray for their salvation.

Number four, share the biblical gospel with them.

And number five, celebrate Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. And that's what we do in the Lord's Table. Take a moment and prepare your hearts as the men come.

Our Father, we do thank you that we are no longer pursuing that worthless path to nowhere, path of pursuing our own righteousness, of trying to establish a right standing before you, based on our own efforts, our own doing, our own obedience. Father, that is a hopeless path “for cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the law to do them.” Thank you, Father, that, instead, you have brought us to see and to understand the gospel, and not just to know it, but to subject ourselves to it, to submit ourselves to it, to acknowledge it as your truth, to humble ourselves in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as our only hope of heaven.

Lord, and today we sit and stand here in His righteousness alone; not one shred of our own do we find any confidence in. Thank you that we can celebrate that reality in the Lord's Table.

Lord, as we come, prepare our hearts with your forgiveness. Lord, each of us in our own lives confesses our sins to you. We don't want to come to this with unforgiven sin because we’ve not

confessed, we've not committed to forsake, and so, Father, we do that even now. Help us to worship you in and through this ordinance. We pray, in Jesus's name, Amen.