



Good morning. My name is Rob Hall and I am the North Campus pastor. It's been awhile since I've been able to come back here and preach. It's so great to see all of you. Turn with me to Romans 10. Today we are continuing our series in the book of Romans. If you remember, Romans 9-11 are a unique section in this letter. This entire section deals with one single question: How does Israel fit into God's plan? Romans 9 deals with Israel's past. Romans 10 deals with their present and Romans 11 will talk about Israel's future. Last week, Mark did an excellent job explaining God's sovereignty and the doctrine of election found in Romans 9. We learned how God sovereignly chose Israel to be a light to the entire world, to be his missionary people. Sadly, instead of fulfilling their calling, they stumbled on the stone that is Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Instead of receiving him by faith and sharing him with the world, they rejected Jesus and became spiritual hoarders.

Last week we talked about God's sovereignty. Today we are going to talk about human responsibility. That's a tension we see all over the Bible. Yes, God is fully in control, but we play a part as well. Here is my big idea: The Gospel is for everybody, but not everybody receives it. The Good News of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is universal. Anyone can come to faith in Jesus, but many don't. Why do lots of smart, loving, and good people reject Jesus? Maybe there is someone in your family—a spouse, a close friend—who you've shared the message of Jesus Christ with and they said, "That's great for you, but it's not for me." I've been in that position several times and it's a hard pill to swallow. How do we deal with that disappointment?

Apostle Paul understood exactly the pain some of us have felt from people we love who have rejected Jesus. Look at 10:1,

**"Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved."**

As a Jewish person, Paul wanted nothing more than his brothers and sisters to come and know Jesus Christ personally. In chapter 9 he even said he'd go to hell for them if it meant they would be saved. Their rejection of Jesus the Messiah broke his heart. So he continually prayed for the salvation of his people. Do we have the same attitude as Paul? Do we earnestly pray for our family and friends who do not know Jesus Christ personally? Does it break your heart? That's a challenge for me. Honestly, there are people I've given up on in my heart. Paul reminds us not to give up on others like that. After all, we'll learn in Romans 11 God's plan to restore Israel. Here, in Romans 10, Paul continues by

outlining four reasons why Israel rejected God. These are similar reasons to why people reject Jesus today. The first reason Israel rejected God is they had zeal for God but didn't know him. Look at verse 2.

### **Why Did Israel Reject God?**

**For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.**

#### **Israel had zeal for God, but didn't know him**

Israel had zeal without knowledge. They had all the Old Testament, all the promises of God, all the prophets, and yet ignored what God had told them in the Scriptures. Zeal is not necessarily a bad thing. But zeal without knowledge can be terrifying. Zeal without knowledge leads to fanaticism. Have you ever met a die-hard Oakland Raider fan? Have you ever met a religious fanatic? You know, the people you see with scary looking signs in downtown San Francisco? Or even more terrifying, those who are willing to blow themselves up for their faith? You can be zealous about God and not know him. Religion can't save you no matter how committed you are.

People today love to say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, just so long as you're sincere!" Ever hear that? The problem is you can be sincere and be sincerely wrong. With all sincerity, you can bring my wife a peanut butter and jelly sandwich when she's hungry and if she ate it, she'd die. Missy is allergic to peanuts. You can be sincere and zealous, but without knowledge, it can be fatal. Paul had this insight into his own people because as a Pharisee, he was once extremely zealous for God. He was a religious fanatic. Listen to what he wrote the church in Galatia, *"For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers"* (Gal.1:13-14). Paul's zeal was based on tradition and religion, not on a correct understanding of the Scriptures. He didn't know God. Israel rejected God because they tried to make themselves righteous by following the law. Their zeal was not based on knowledge. What knowledge is Paul referring to? He tells us next in verses 3-4. The second reason Israel rejected God is they tried to save themselves by good works.

#### **Israel tried to save themselves by good works**

**Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not**

**submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.**

Israel didn't know the righteousness of God and instead tried to follow all the religious rules, 613 of them to be exact. They even added to that number! Instead of trusting in Christ, the only one to follow all the law, they put their faith in themselves. Many people do this today. Religious people create all kinds of rules to live by thinking in the end that it will save them. For some, you believe that if you give up all your bad habits and stop doing everything that is fun, then you'll be a good Christian. For others, they work hard, give to charity, and volunteer hoping to be good enough for heaven. For others, they just hope God grades on a curve and if their bad deeds outweigh their good, then they'll be ok in the end. Paul has already argued against all this in Romans 1-3. He says it doesn't matter if you are religious, non-religious, Jew or Gentile, everyone falls short of the glory of God; we all deserve God's wrath. All of our righteousness acts are like filthy rags. And the only way to get God's righteousness is to submit to it and receive it by faith in Jesus Christ.

That's why Paul makes a huge statement in verse 4, "**Christ is the culmination of the law...**" There are three ways to understand this verse:

- Christ is the fulfillment of the law, in the sense that all Old Testament types, figures, institutions, and ritual pointed to and were fulfilled in him.
- Christ is the goal of the law in the sense that the law existed primarily to lead people to faith in the Messiah. Its purpose was not to save, but to send the sinner to Christ.
- Christ is the termination of the law in the sense that the Mosaic Law as a covenant has ended. God's people are no longer legally or morally bound to the stipulations of the old covenant.

The point is in Jesus, there is now a righteousness available for everyone who believes. We trust in Jesus and his fulfillment of the law, not in our adherence to it. That brings us to the third reason Israel rejected God and it's found in verses 5-8; Israel misunderstood the purpose of the law.

#### **Israel misunderstood the purpose of the law**

**Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person 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 message concerning faith that we proclaim: (verses 5-8).**

Paul, as he does so often, quotes from the Old Testament. And it's really difficult to know why Paul does that in every instance. Here, he's making a clear point about the law. He takes a quote from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, two books Moses wrote, and applies them to the work of Jesus Christ. The first quote is about the way Israel tried to obtain righteousness by the law. Israel really believed they could be righteous by living and obeying all the commands of the law. On the other hand, a righteousness by faith is not about what we do but what's been done for us in Christ. The contrast is that the law is to be obeyed but the gospel is to be believed. Paul's saying salvation is already available, it's nearer than you think. It's close to your mouth and in your heart. So, you don't have to run up to heaven to get it; Christ has already come down. And you don't have to raise Christ from the dead because that's already happened. Everything you need to be saved is already available.

What then is the purpose of the law? Paul tells us in Galatians 3:24, "**So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.**" In other words, the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ. The law was a sign pointing to the need for a savior. The law shows us just how much we fall short because we can't keep all of it. Israel rejected God by misunderstanding the purpose of the law.

Now, let's jump down to verses 16-19 to see the final reason Paul gives. Israel ultimately rejected the good news about Jesus Christ.

#### **Israel rejected the good news about Christ**

**But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.**

**But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:**

**"Their voice has gone out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world."**

**Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."**

Paul asks and then answers two questions. The first objection people might have is, "Maybe Israel didn't hear the gospel." Paul says, of course they heard. They knew about the Messiah, they heard the Good News, they just didn't accept it. Israel had the Old Testament, the promises, the prophets and even Jesus himself finally came and lived among his own people. Some received his message but many rejected it. The second question Paul anticipates is, "Well maybe they didn't understand the message." Paul answers by quoting Moses and says, "Of course they understood. They even got jealous when they saw the Gentiles coming to God." Paul's point is that most of the Jewish people, not all,

failed to see God doing something new among the Gentiles. They failed to seek a relationship with God in the right way.

The logical next question is: Who then can be saved? If God's own people, the chosen people, are missing the boat, who can be saved? Paul answers in verses 9-10.

### **Who Then Can be Saved Today?**

**If you declare 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 profess your faith and are saved.**

#### **The possibility of salvation**

Paul clearly summarizes how to become a Christian in these verses. Last week we talked about God's part in salvation—his sovereignty. Today we're talking about our part, our responsibility. I think God puts these chapters right next to each other to show us the balance. The Bible teaches both. We first see the possibility of salvation. Circle the word "if." Salvation is only a possibility, "If you declare with your mouth and believe in your heart." Both of these are important, confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart. To confess without believing is not enough. A lot of people say, "Sure, I'm a Christian! I believe in God and Jesus." There are a lot of famous people who thank God at an awards show. But, to be a Christian is to declare Jesus is Lord. The word "Lord" is used around 640 times in the Bible. It is the single most used word for God. It's saying Jesus is God.

Not only does something need to be confessed outwardly, but inwardly there must be faith. The word "believe" in Greek means "to trust in, cling to, rely on, and commit to." What do you believe? That He died on the cross? Paul doesn't say that. He says you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection is the central issue in Christianity. It's what separates us from all other religions. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that without the resurrection, we don't even have a faith. But, let me be clear, confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart are two sides of the same coin. Both happen at the same time. Heart belief leads to justification (a right standing with God) and confession with the mouth to salvation. In verses 11-13, Paul moves from the possibility of salvation to the availability of it;

**As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes 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, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**

#### **The availability of salvation**

Who can be saved? Paul answers: anyone. It's a universal offer. In verse 11 Paul says Christ and his gospel are available to "anyone." In verse 12 he says there is absolutely no favoritism, salvation

is open to both Jew and Gentile. Then in verse 13 he says "everyone" who calls upon Jesus will be saved. Salvation is available to anyone and everyone but there is a condition that needs to be met. In verse 13 Paul quotes from yet another Old Testament passage, Joel 2:32. The Lord in Joel is Yahweh, the sacred and special name for God. Now Paul identifies the Lord with Jesus. This connection is huge. Paul is saying again, Jesus is God. And calling on his name assumes they know and believe his name. Do you see the progression of Paul's logic? First he talks about why the Jews have rejected God. Then he says anybody can be saved right now by calling on the name of Jesus. If you do that, you'll never be put to shame. Paul continues by reminding us of the responsibility of salvation in verses 14-15;

**How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

#### **The responsibility of salvation**

Paul asks four rhetorical questions beginning with "how":

- How can anyone call on the Lord unless they believe?
- How can they believe unless they hear?
- How can they hear unless they've been preached to?
- How can they be preached to unless somebody's sent out to?

You should know that the word for preach used here is not the word for preach in other New Testament passages. The word means to make a public announcement. Back in the ancient world long before Twitter, a messenger would go to the public square and share news. They were called heralds. That's the word Paul uses here, herald. Paul is not talking about professional pastors. He's not talking about preachers or evangelists either. The emphasis is on the message, not the messenger. Anybody that shares the good news with an unbeliever is a preacher. A proclaimer. A herald. Any time you say a word about Christ to somebody else, you're preaching. You're heralding. And when you do that, one of the most ugly parts of your body, especially in the Birkenstock world of the First Century, your feet, become beautiful.

Why does Paul include this line of thinking here? I think he's reminding the church in Rome, and us, of our responsibility. The responsibility of every Christian is share the gospel message with somebody else. If you're a Christian, that's your responsibility. Just like Israel, we are not given this news to be spiritual hoarders, but to pass it on. That's what we are about at CPC, "To make and mature more followers of Christ." Our vision to reach 5000 people by 2020 is not for our benefit. We've got more than enough people. We grow because there are lots of people going to hell if somebody doesn't reach them. And the older a church

gets the more self-centered and ingrown it tends to become. It's so easy as a church to spend all our time, energy, and effort on those inside these walls. If we are not careful, we'll end up in the same place as Israel—stubborn, lost and ultimately rejecting Jesus and his mission to seek and save the lost. Let's look at the last thing Paul has to say in verses 20-21;

### **The Gospel is for Everybody!**

And Isaiah boldly says,

“I was found by those who did not seek me;

I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

But concerning Israel he says,

“All day long I have held out my hands

to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

### **To all non Jews**

Paul ends this chapter by giving a word to all non Jews and a word to all Jews. To all non Jews, he quotes from Isaiah to say that long before Jesus came, God's message would be spread all over the world. Those who did not seek God—Gentiles—are actually finding him, while the Jews who were offered grace continue to reject him.

### **To all Jews**

In verse 21 there is some good news for Israel. God doesn't just allow himself to be found, he holds out his loving hands and invites Israel back in. When I pick up my son from preschool I usually crouch down and hold out my hands and he runs into them with a big smile. We hug, kiss and get all happy, it's awesome. In the same way, “all day long” God is doing the same thing for his people. Begging them to return to his open arms, even though they continue to reject him. Next week, in chapter 11, we'll see the storybook ending that God has planned for Israel.

As I said in the beginning, the Gospel is for everybody, but not everybody receives it. All this week, I've been thinking about my own grandfather who helped raise my brother and me. After I came to faith in Christ at age 17, he was one of the first people I told about Jesus. He saw how God had changed my life and at the dinner table one night he politely told me how he didn't believe in God and never would. Years later, right before I moved to Las Vegas to plant a church, I sat him and my grandmother down and clearly explained the gospel again. My grandmother said, “I'm Lutheran, so I'm good.” My grandfather, said, “That's nice for you Robert, but it's not for me.” Eight years after that night, as my grandfather was dying an agonizing death from emphysema (he was a long time smoker), I flew to Oregon to share the gospel with him one last time, which he still rejected. As I drove back to the Portland airport that day I was sad, tearful and a little bitter at God. Why would this great man reject the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ? The hard truth is, my grandfather, like Israel, was stubborn. Thankfully, I was able to share Christ with my grandmother before she died of cancer and she embraced Jesus as Lord and Savior.

This passage leaves us with two hard truths:

» Every person is responsible for how they treat the “word of Christ.”

» Every Christian is responsible for communicating the “word of Christ.”

As you go about your life this week, wherever it is God has placed you, may it be true that no one around you could ever say they have not heard or understood the gospel.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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