**Lesson 27: Wrong About Righteousness**

Text: Romans 10:1-13

**Introduction**

Paul made it clear in the conclusion of chapter 9 that Israel remains in a state of unrighteousness before God because they sought to establish their own righteousness. As long as they rejected Christ’s offer of righteousness, they would remain condemned. It was their own unbelief that fitted them for destruction. It was NOT God’s will for them to remain in unbelief. It was God’s will for them to believe unto righteousness. Paul shares this desire in chapter 10. In this lesson, we will see that the Jews were wrong about righteousness. We will also see that the way to salvation is available to all who will believe! For the sake of all eternity, you need to be right about righteousness.

1. **Paul greatly desired for his fellow countrymen to be saved. (v. 1-5)**
   1. The fact that he prayed for them to be saved indicates that they were lost but could be saved. (v. 1)
   2. They were not lost due to a lack of interest in spiritual matters. (v. 2) No one would accuse the Jews of being disinterested in God and the Word of God. From childhood they committed to memory lengthy passages of the Old Testament. They displayed Scriptures in their homes to remind them of their relationship with God. Zeal was not the problem. The problem was that they had zeal without knowledge. Just because you are zealous doesn’t mean you are headed the right way.
   3. Zeal is not the proper measurement regarding acceptance with God. God does not grant righteousness to those who are zealous in their religion. He does not count the worship of a false god as worship of Christ. To be saved, a person must place faith in Jesus Christ alone!
   4. Paul expounds upon their lack of knowledge and righteousness. (v. 3)
      1. They were ignorant of God’s righteousness. Don’t misunderstand. They knew God was righteous. They just didn’t know how to be right with God. They were ignorant of the righteousness that God provided.
      2. The word *ignorant* can mean that they are simply uninformed. It can also mean willfully ignorant. Friberg cites Romans 10:3 as an example of “inexcusable moral ignorance; disregard.” As students of the Old Testament, they had full access to the truth that righteousness comes by faith apart from works. As we saw in chapter 4, they had the examples of Abraham and David that clearly taught justification by faith. They willfully disregarded this truth in favor of trying to attain righteousness through the law. Their problem was not a lack of knowledge, but an unwillingness to submit to God’s way of righteousness.
   5. Faith in the person and finished work of Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. (v. 4) The word *end* can mean completion or goal. There is a sense in which Christ is both. He fulfilled the law. He is also the focus of the law. In a race, the finish line represents both the termination and goal of the race (Douglas Moo). The same is true of Christ. His coming brought an end to the Old Testament era and He is the One to Whom the whole Old Testament points. The purpose of the verse is to demonstrate that righteousness is a gift to be received by faith, not a reward earned based on one’s performance! Unfortunately, because the Jews rejected Christ, they missed righteousness altogether.
   6. If righteousness were possible by the law, it could only be achieved by perfectly keeping the law. (v. 5) Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5 as his basis for this statement. If you are going to attain righteousness by the law, it requires living every moment in perfect harmony with God’s will. Only Jesus can legitimately claim to have done so.
2. **The righteousness that is received by faith is readily available to all who will believe. (v. 6-13)** 
   1. Paul used Deuteronomy 9:4 and 30:11-14 to demonstrate the access the Jews had to God’s message of salvation (v. 6-8). Moses’ words in Deuteronomy refer to the availability of the God’s Word to the people. They did not have to ascend to heaven nor descend to the depths of the earth to receive it. They had it! God gave it to them! They only had to believe.
   2. Paul applied this passage to the gospel. Israel did not need to wait for their Messiah to descend from heaven. He already came! They did not need to wait for Him to rise again from the grave. He already did! They had no excuse for not responding! God’s plan of salvation was right before them!
   3. They simply had to acknowledge Jesus for Who He is and trust His finished work to become a recipient of salvation by faith. (v. 9-10)
      1. They had to *confess* (acknowledge, admit) that Jesus is the LORD. A person cannot be saved without receiving Jesus for Who He really is.
      2. They had to *believe* (trust) that God raised Him from the dead. A person cannot be saved without trusting the finished work of Christ on the cross and the resurrection. Only a living Savior has power to save!
      3. It is with the heart that a person believes and becomes a recipient of God-provided righteousness.
      4. It is with the mouth that one confesses and is saved. This is the outward expression of inward faith.
   4. Those who trust Christ will not be ashamed (put to shame, disappointed). God’s gift of righteousness will deliver you at the time of judgment. (v. 11; Isaiah 28:16)
   5. This good news is for Jews and Gentiles alike! (v. 12) Jesus is Lord over all and able to save all who call upon Him. “If the way is opened for Gentiles, it is certainly not closed to Jews.” (Douglas Moo)
   6. Paul quoted Joel 2:32 to prove that all who call upon the Lord for salvation will be saved! (v. 13)
3. **Central Idea: Israel could be saved if they would receive God’s offer of righteousness by faith.**
4. **Application: God will save any who will receive His offer of righteousness by faith.** 
   1. There are many who are religiously lost. Many who have access to the gospel have not submitted to God’s plan for righteousness. We cannot rightly consider them right with God because they are passionate about their religion. They are dreadfully wrong about righteousness and it will result in an eternity separated from God.
   2. Salvation is found only in trusting Christ. You must acknowledge Jesus for Who He is. He is not just a religious teacher. He is not just a good man. He is not just a prophet. He is the eternal Son of God. He is Jehovah! He is God.
   3. You must trust His finished work on the cross and the fact of His literal resurrection. You cannot trust Him plus your good works. You must abandon any confidence you might put in good you have done. It is only what Jesus did that counts for righteousness.
   4. There must be a time when you personally place faith in Christ. You must believe. You must call upon the Lord for salvation.
   5. A notorious sinner prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Jesus said the same man went home justified (declared righteous by God). The self-righteous religious leader did not (Luke 18:14).

**Conclusion**

We are prone to think there is more we must do in order to be saved, but there is not. If you could work to earn your own salvation, the sacrificial death of Jesus was unnecessary. Paul greatly desired for Israel to understand the simplicity of the gospel. He wanted them to be saved. They could be saved if they would forsake their own righteousness in order to receive the righteousness provided by their Messiah. Who is supplying your righteousness?