

## SAVED

### Romans 10:1-15

We have heard the expression “Pick yourself up by your bootstraps.” The picture this brings to mind is that of someone pulling on his or her shoes and as a result being lifted off the ground. In a way, this is rather humorous when we realized the impossibility of it. Of course, the idea that this expression is attempting to communicate is that by *hard work and initiative* a person can rise above his circumstances. People in poverty can work their way out of poverty. People without any education can get an education on their own. We like the idea of people being able to be successful if they will just apply themselves and work hard. However, we realize that some basics have to be in place before a person can rise above where he is.

A simple illustration is that of climbing the stairs from one floor to the next. You walk to the base of the stairs and take one step at a time and eventually get to the next level. You might say “I did it.” In a way, you did; but, the most important thing that allowed you to be at the higher level was not your ability and energy but the fact that the steps were there. Someone had already provided the means so that many people can go from one floor to the next.

In the last four verses of Romans Chapter 9 Paul had compared the response of the Gentiles to the Good News of the Gospel of God’s Salvation in Jesus Christ with the response of the Israelites. Following the symbolism of getting from one floor to the next, Paul noted that the Gentiles found their way to the next floor and the Israelite had failed to even recognize the staircase.

In chapters 9-11 of his letter to the church at Rome, Paul focused on God’s plan for the Israelites and how that plan was impacted by the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we know, some believed but most of these descendants of Abraham did not accept the truth of the gospel. Paul taught that this rejection by the majority of the Israelites was the result of a temporary blindness to the truth and that, eventually, many would believe and would experience God’s salvation. Even though Paul’s main mission was to the Gentile world, he was very much concerned about his fellow countrymen and he prayed for them.

#### Pray for Others - 10:1-4

<sup>1</sup>Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. <sup>2</sup>For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. <sup>3</sup>For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Romans 10:1-4 (NASB95)

God had dealt with the children of Israel and had given them instructions regarding their relationship to Himself and to others. The Ten Commandments were the basic rudiments of relationships. The Israelites added many refinements to the basics but did little more than to add “style” to these basic rules. They practiced the rules and put all the refinements into place because they thought this was pleasing to God. They were devoted to God; but, as Paul pointed out “not based on true knowledge.” It was as if they had been walking the halls but had not discovered the stairs. They failed to realize that the purpose in their knowing how to walk (the carrying out of the Law) was so they could climb the stairs and arrive at the next level. They thought that keeping the Law (walking the halls) was all there was.

The end or goal of the Law is to bring us to Jesus so we can be participants in His righteousness. It is Christ Who lifts us from the earthly plane to the heavenly plane. By placing our trust (belief) in Jesus we place ourselves in His provision and care – we walk in His way.

At the end of Chapter nine, Paul used a picture of people in a race. Some (the Gentiles)

did not even realize they were in a race and others (the Israelites) were running hard but were confused about what defined the finish line. Paul observed that the Gentiles wound up at the correct finish line by faith and the Israelites were so convinced that their idea of what constituted victory was correct that they missed the real prize for running the race. Paul carried this analogy over into Chapter ten. The zeal that Paul wrote about them having alluded to the fact that they were “in the race and running hard.” The problem was that they were “running” to a destination of having a righteousness that came from “keeping the law” and were completely ignoring the righteous that is “imputed by faith.”

The New Bible Commentary sums up the situation as

The Jews' preoccupation with the law is again the underlying problem, as Paul implies in v 4. For they have failed to understand that Christ is himself the 'culmination' of the law. Paul uses the word *telos*, which some translate 'end' (NIV; RSV) and others 'goal'. In keeping with the race imagery of the passage, however, the word probably contains elements of both these translations. Christ, Paul is saying, has all along been the goal to which the law has been pointing; and, since that goal has now been attained—Christ has come—the pursuit of the law should now be at an end. This verse stands along with Matt. 5:17 (Christ came to fulfill the Law), as a key expression of a dominant NT theme: the culmination or 'fulfillment' of the old covenant law and all its institutions in Jesus the Messiah. With that culmination comes also God's intention to offer righteousness to anyone who believes, Gentile as well as Jew.

That last sentence in this commentary gives us insight as to what God's plan is all about. The part we (as those who are in Christ) have is that we are to share God's plan with others.

### Confess and Believe – 10:5-10

<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), <sup>7</sup> or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Romans 10:5–10 (NASB95)

In speaking of the Law, Paul quoted Moses “The man who does these things will live by them.” This means that the benefit of keeping the law is its own reward; however, it has no power to take us beyond the present existence of our earthly, physical world. We keep the law and we function on the earthly level with the principles of the law as our guide. We can be “successful” in the context of that existence; or (stated in another way) we have “the righteousness that is of the law.” We should never be satisfied with that since we realize there is more to our existence than just the physical. Every morally sentient human being has knowledge of God revealed (made evident) to him or her. This evidence revelation is twofold. The first is within each human being (because we are created in the image of God) and the second means is by the physical world creation which shows His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature.

We can remember that Paul connected (true) righteousness (justification before God) with faith in verse 17 of chapter one of this letter. If our righteousness is by **faith**, then we realize that we cannot ever be deserving enough for God (in Christ) to come down from heaven to live among us. We also realize that we do not have power within ourselves to bring Christ back to life after His sacrificial death. God's love and grace prevailed over our lack of merit and His might and power triumphed in place of our inadequacy. He is the Provider and the Builder. He saw our great need and, motivated by His love for us, met the need from His abundance.

If we can't ever do enough to be deserving and we will never have the power to effect a resurrection, then how can we attain to the righteousness that we see in Christ? In other words,

how can we be saved since we are without merit and without power? This is an age-old question; however, there is an age-old answer! God's Plan of Salvation has always been "Trust and Obey." Adam knew it and blew it. Noah knew it and built an ark to the saving of his family from the flood. Abraham knew it and down through the ages, the roll call of the faithful gives testimony to this truth.

In verse eight, Paul quoted a phrase from Moses' address to the Israelite before they entered the Promised Land. Moses had told them in Deuteronomy 30:11 that what was expected of them was not too difficult nor out of their reach. He went on to say (in 30:14) that "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it." In other words, they knew what God expected of them so well that they could tell it to others. They knew that what God expected was the right thing – they could agree with it. The failure was in the follow-through or the obedience to do what they knew. The same situation was in play with the Jews after the coming of Christ and after the gospel message had been proclaimed. They had heard it so many times they could tell others and they could agree with the message if they would have had an open mind.

Notice that Paul saw at least two parts to the whole. In verse 10, we see justification as a result of belief or faith. What must we believe? As verse nine indicates, "God raised Jesus from the dead." This is a summary and conclusion of all that God did for us in Jesus Christ in His taking on our sin, paying the price to redeem us and then gaining victory over death and the grave as demonstrated by His resurrection. Jesus is the Provision by which we are placed in right relationship to God. To believe this truth "in our hearts" means that in every part of "who we are" this truth is assimilated and becomes an integral part of us. The second part of the whole of salvation that Paul mentioned is confession. What must we confess? Again, verse nine tells us. "Jesus is Lord." Just as "God raised Jesus from the dead" is a part of the whole truth of what God did for us in Christ. I believe "confess with the mouth" is only a part of the "expression" of the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. In other words, we do need to say it, **but just saying it is not all there is to it.** (Some may think, "Well, you must really mean it when you say it." There is more to it than just saying it and really meaning it!) The Lordship of Jesus Christ must be expressed (confessed) in every word, thought, and deed. This is the essence of obedience. So, then salvation results from faith which leads to justification and confession of Jesus as Lord, or simply "trust and obey." (Notice that this is in agreement with what Paul wrote in Romans 8:14 regarding the fact that those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Following the leading of the Holy Spirit is how we confess the Lordship of Christ in our lives.)

#### Whoever – 10:11-13

<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; <sup>13</sup> for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." Romans 10:11-13 (NASB95)

This salvation is available to Jews and Gentiles. Paul quoted Old Testament Scripture from Isaiah 28:16 that tells us **anyone** who puts their trust in the "Chief Cornerstone" will not be confused or ashamed. Salvation works the same for Jews and Gentiles since it is the same Lord Who is over all. Our access to God's provision is to simply ask.

#### Tell All – 10:14-15

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" Romans 10:14-15 (NASB95)

This set of verses has traditionally been taught as a motivation for Christians to be involved in carrying out the Great Commission. If we have called upon the name of the Lord and come into His salvation then we will share with others the love that God has given to us. The most loving thing we can do for others is to introduce them to our Heavenly Father. Since believing is a requirement, then it is very important that people hear the message from God's word. People cannot believe (in) something about which they have never heard. Not all who hear will believe, but our responsibility is to be sure they have heard.

The original intent that Paul had in writing these verses was to show, beyond any doubt, that the responsibility for Israel not accepting the good news of God's salvation belongs to them. In verses 14-15 (and 17-18) all the requirements to communicate the message of salvation are presented. Israel had heard, because many preachers had been sent to them. The failure came about because they did not "heed" the information that was "preached" to them and would not believe.

The way the Jews acted was as if they had never heard the message. How could they not have heard when the gospel message had been declared all over that area of the world? Paul could have repeated what he said in the first chapter of Romans about the Gentiles who refused to heed what they could see from the world around them about God: they are without excuse. If that conclusion was true two thousand years ago, then it is even more true today regarding practically everyone in the world. The word has gone out. The availability of the internet and mass media reaches practically everyone. The problem is not so much in the sending and proclaiming as it is in the heeding and believing.