

Romans 9:30-10:13 - Christ Alone  
Ryan Patty / 12.18.22 / Christ Community Church

If you have your Bible please open it to the book of Romans. We will be starting out at the end of chapter 9. Last week Jeff faithfully preached from Romans 9 about this big, sovereign God that we serve. A God who is sovereign not just over all that happens out there in the world but a God who is sovereign over the hearts of man as well. So we saw that God has chosen and called a particular group of people to himself (a group that consists of people from every tribe, tongue and nation). This group is no longer just limited to Israel but now Gentiles are included in the family of God. So we see that the scope has widened. Yet the question comes as we saw last week, is God unfair for choosing a people? Is there injustice with him? And the Scriptures would say, by no means. God is sovereign, yet as we have seen and will see in chapter 10, we still make decisions. We are held responsible to believe.

Sometimes when we are thinking about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility with our western minds it can feel like two magnets. I can remember playing with these magnets in science class and when they are facing a certain direction and you try to push them together there is this push-back, a hard tension, they don't want to go together. Maybe for some of you that's God's sovereignty and man's responsibility as presented in Scripture. These two concepts, like magnetic force fields, push against one another.

But that is not how the Bible presents it. The Bible presents it as if one magnet is turned over and then what happens. The magnets snap together perfectly. For the writers of Scripture God is completely sovereign over all things including salvation. Man is still commanded to believe and held responsible to. God's elect will come to faith. Those who are predestined will believe. These things go together perfectly.

But here in Romans 9-11, Paul has been looking at why in the world has Israel rejected their messiah, Jesus Christ. What caused them to do this? That was the focus of last week. Not all of Israel is truly Israel. There is a true spiritual Israel that God has called to himself. So last week we saw things from God's perspective, but here in Romans 9:30-10:13 we turn and look at it from man's perspective. Still the same big theme, why do the majority of Jews not believe, even though God had chosen the nation of Israel? Paul answered from God's perspective that question, now he answers it from the other perspective.

Follow along as I read our passage - Romans 9:30 - 10:13 (CSB)

30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. 31 But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. 32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. 33 As it is written,

**Look, I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over and a rock to trip over, and the one who believes on him will not be put to shame.**

10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation. 2 I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 Since they are ignorant of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, 5 since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: **The one who does these things will live by them.**

6 But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks like this: **Do not say in your heart, "Who will go up to heaven?"** that is, to bring Christ down 7 or, **"Who will go down into the abyss?"** that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. 8 On the contrary, what does it say? **The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.** This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame,** 12 since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. 13 **For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

Let's pray.

Our main point this morning is that The righteousness of God comes through faith alone in Christ alone

This is the human perspective that Paul expounds on here and ultimately the difficulty, the obstacle that inhibited the Jews to embrace Christ. So we are going to flesh out this main point through three obstacles that the Jews struggled with, and I would say many today struggle with as well.

1. Christ the stumbling stone
2. Christ the end and goal
3. Christ the Lord

### 1. Christ the stumbling stone

Paul opens up with the question as to how should we understand this shift in redemptive history.

30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. 31 But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. 32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. 33 As it is written,

**Look, I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over and a rock to trip over, and the one who believes on him will not be put to shame.**

Paul's heart is broken for his fellow Jews. He can say at the beginning of chapter 9 that he is in great sorrow and unceasing anguish. He wishes that he himself could be cursed and cut off, that is not a part of God's chosen people if it means that more Jews come to faith in Christ. (is your heart burdened by the family member or friend who doesn't know Christ? If not, pray that Romans 9:2 and 3 were true of you). So he is burdened by this. And now at the end of 9 he's providing this in depth theology concerning "why?" Why haven't the Jews embraced Christ as messiah? **I'm sure that even those in the Roman church who are Jewish are wondering this same thing about their fellow family members.** And so Paul is going to quote from Jewish Scripture, the OT, to highlight why. And the first big obstacle (from the human perspective) that is outlined is that Christ is the stumbling stone for them. Gentiles who were NOT pursuing any righteousness found it through faith. Jews were seeking a righteousness in their own way did not find it. God in his sovereign plan of redemption is now including Gentiles and barely any Jews were believing (Paul's explaining this in chapter 9-11). And so, again, looking at this from the human perspective, what has happened?

Two truths are evident here.

- A. First, Israel pursued righteousness, not by faith, but by works (v. 32a) Israel stumbled because they did not pursue righteousness by faith but by works. A works apart from faith. Paul has been at pains throughout Romans to make it clear that righteousness cannot be attained through following the Law because we are

incapable of perfect obedience. Romans 3:20 tells us this. Rather than trust God and his promises that he would save them himself, they were trying to be right with God through their obedience apart from faith. Rather than faith and trust in God to provide, it was obedience as a self-confirmation that they were in the right. We have seen this throughout Romans, justification cannot happen through obedience on it's own. Saving faith brings about obedience.

- a. Faith-filled Obedience and faith-filled works come after salvation, not before as a means to earn it. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Don't fall prey into relying on your works or your obedience as the measure of your standing before God. Jesus paid it all for you, live in light of that.

B. Second, Israel stumbled over the stumbling stone (32b-33) When Paul says that Israel has stumbled over a stumbling stone, he is using a metaphor that appears in two passages in Isaiah. In Isaiah 8, God announces judgment on Israel for their blatant refusal to fear and trust him. So he says in Isaiah 8:13-15 - 13 You are to regard only the Lord of Armies as holy. Only he should be feared; only he should be held in awe. 14 He will be a sanctuary; but for the two houses of Israel, he will be a stone to stumble over and a rock to trip over, and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 Many will stumble over these; they will fall and be broken; they will be snared and captured. But then in verse 33 of our text in Chapter 9 Paul alludes to Isaiah 28, where Israel once again finds itself under judgment, but here the stone that is laid is a precious cornerstone. Therefore the Lord God said: Look, I have laid a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will be unshakable - Isaiah 28:16

- b. Do you see what God in his infinite wisdom has done? Paul is pointing out that these two stones are the one and the same. Both are Christ - the Messiah. For the Jews, he is a stumbling stone. They cannot get over him, he is the cause of their downfall **as his message of a free righteousness only found in Him is too much to embrace.** But for those who do embrace the message, and when Paul is writing it is predominantly Gentile, he is the Cornerstone. The sure foundation of the faith.
- c. So Paul is painting a picture here of Christ by appealing to the Father in the OT. Those who trust in Him, will find shelter and peace and security in the midst of judgment. But those who reject him, who stumble over him will face His judgment. Jesus is both savior and judge, and that's what the stone metaphor that Paul is using is getting at.

- d. So what about us today? How do we stumble? So how do people stumble over Christ today? They'll say, "It can't be that easy. Christ can't forgive me. If you had only known what I have done. I could never set foot in a church. You don't know my past. **Do you hear the repeated refrain there?** They have sinned too much so there is no way God could forgive them. Or my favorite, God would strike me dead if I stepped foot in a church... To which we should all say "why would he strike you dead when he sent his Son to die for you?"
- i. Or the flip side. Those who don't think of themselves as sinners. You got one side of the coin who just thinks they sinned too much, so it can't be that easy for them to come to Christ, and you got the other side who don't think of themselves as all that bad. They self-justify their sin, or they minimize it as not all that bad. *They do a lot more good than bad.* They're nice to their neighbors, even shoveling the driveway for them every now and then. **Surely God sees!**
  - ii. All the while both sets of people stumble over the message of the Gospel. The free message of salvation, to the one who thinks they have sinned too much or the one who thinks they aren't all that bad, a message to repent and believe.
- e. And that is where the Jews stumbled. They placed their faith in their works of the law and their obedience to the law, and therefore missed out on what the Gentiles found. What did they find? That the righteousness of God comes by faith alone in Christ alone.
- f. So we have seen that Christ is the stumbling stone, but second, we need to see

## 2. Christ the end and goal

Jesus Christ is the end, goal, consummation, culmination, telos, fulfillment and completion of that the law was pointing towards.

10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation. 2 I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 Since they are ignorant of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, 5 since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: **The one who does these things will live by them.**

Allow me to come back to verse 2 at the end. Building off the stumbling stone language, Paul emphasizes that the Jews take their faith seriously. They loved God, they desired to serve him, and yet, they were ignorant of how God desired to be Known.

**Brothers and sisters, fundamental to the idea of salvation, worship, the Christian life, and everything else pertaining to Godliness in this life, fundamental to all of those things is this question: what would God have me to do?** When we start with the opposite, "what do I need to do?" We inevitably end up in the wrong spot.

This was the issue for the Jews. The Law was something they *thought* they could do. They were struggling with receiving the grace of God freely vs earning it through works or obedience. But the title of my point this morning is that Christ is the end and the goal? What do I mean by that? Well a few things.

Christ is the end of the law in that he is the new and greater Israel, the Mosaic covenant is no longer binding on God's people as he has inaugurated the new covenant.

And He is the goal. The law, the prophets, the entirety of the OT was all pointing forward and anticipating the Messiah to come. And then he did. Jesus Christ is the consummation, climax, the focal point of salvation history.

When Steve Jobs first drew a design for the iPad he had an idea for a tablet with a multitouch glass display and no keyboard. Between the first sketch of that and the initial unveiling, Apple invented a personal computer, the Apple Newton Messagepad, the ipod, and cellular capability for those devices. When the iPad was unveiled, it now fulfills all of those previous iterations and simultaneously makes them obsolete. (yes I just compared Jesus to an ipad)

So it is with Christ, he is the end and the goal. So maybe you're not a tech person but you enjoy sports... Think of a race.

When one thinks of running a race, when you reach the goal, you also reach the end. When I ran my personal marathon a few years ago (I say personal because some of you would call it a 5K but it felt like a marathon to me), when I ran that, you better believe the goal for me was the end! So it's the same here. "Jesus Christ is the goal and purpose of the law in that the law points to him. At the same time he is the end of the law" - Schreiner. That is what I mean when I say he is the end and the goal. So as we said from Romans 7, we now as the new covenant people of God have a law-fulfilling freedom found in Christ. We, by God's Spirit and in our union with Christ, uphold the Law.

So in light of this, there is a question concerning verses 5 and 8, when Paul quotes Moses speaking to the Israelites and says "The one who does these things will live by them," or in v. 8 "the message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" - what in the world is Paul saying? Is he elsewhere saying that the law never could give righteousness and here he's quoting Moses as saying well actually it could?

**The key to understanding these quotations is to understand that Christ is the end, telos, culmination of the law. We have to read these quotations redemptive-historically AND understand that Paul is using a typological hermeneutic.** He's using typology.

- We have seen him do this before in Romans. In Romans 3 he makes the point that all have sinned, Jew and Gentile alike, and he quotes from Ps. 36:1 to say there is no fear of God before their eyes. Contextually in that Psalm, the Psalmist is speaking about other people, but Paul brings it over as a type and shows how it is true of all people. He's doing the same here in our passage. Typologically bringing over old covenant propositions to be understood in light of new covenant realities.

And here is the clear reference. Christ is the end for all who believe it says at the end of v.4. The Jews had not believed, and therefore were still placing themselves under the Law. And Paul is appealing with his brethren throughout Romans, "why in the world would you do that?!" This is his reasoning:

Christ has come as the final sacrifice, therefore your animal sacrifices are no longer valid. And if you don't have atonement for your sins then you have to uphold the law perfectly. And guess what, you can't! It's this vicious circle that Paul is pointing out to the Jews. When you don't embrace Christ, you don't have righteousness. Christ is the end and the goal for all who believe. So the appeal comes, BELIEVE!

Second, I want to finish this section in light of v. 2 - 2 I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

Sometimes we can think that a zeal for God is good enough. We can see a passion in their life, we can hear the words "I love God" but as we observe this zeal we recognize it is uninformed. It is ignorant of the ways of God. Remember what I said earlier is the most important question? What would God have me do?

Paul can warn Timothy to watch out for this type of zeal. 2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but (and here is where the zeal comes in) according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear.

Having a zeal without knowledge is a terrible thing. It makes people resist faith, oppose obedience to God's Word, it makes people stiff-necked and stubborn. We see this in heretics and the cults. They insist upon their "good intentions" as if they could not be mistaken. They must be right! Who are we to question them? That is a very dangerous thing to say. Because what is clear is that their salvation is based on their good intentions. Their heartfelt intentions, Their zeal. All the while they truly aren't saved. They are going to Hell.

What Paul is at pains to clarify is that the Jews lacked a full comprehension. There is a particular knowledge of who God is and what He has done and how I have sinned that is necessary for salvation. And the problem today is that we often mistake a zeal, a nicety, a happiness, with Christian salvation. But knowledge is necessary. This is why Peter can say to always be ready to give a defense or a reason for the hope that is within you!



The idea of a reason is fundamental to knowledge. So let's say that a friend or neighbor or coworker comes to you and says "why are you a Christian?" And you say, "Well I don't know that I can give you concrete reasons but I can tell you how it makes me feel. I have this hope I never had before. This optimism concerning life. This wonderful feeling although I don't know specifically what it is?" And the person replies, "well what specifically is this hope you have?"

And you reply, "Well, I don't know. I'm just more hopeful. I feel happier as a Christian." Well in that case Peter would say you are no help to him at all. You can't give them a reason. And so the person goes and tries to get this feeling that you have and they search to no avail and they can't find it. Why?

Because we did not clearly lay out a knowledgeable reason. Now I am not arguing for exhaustive knowledge. And yes the Spirit reveals to our hearts the truth of the Gospel, so there is something to our Spirit-wrought feelings. But surely a base line of knowledge is necessary according to Christ and the Apostles. We must speak in light of the truth of Scripture - 1 Cor 15:3-4 - 3 For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. You can tell the person about your hope like this: I recognized that I had sinned, fallen short, and that I would stand one day before God my maker. I recognized nothing that I could do or say would be enough. So I looked to his Son. I recognized that Jesus paid it all for me. For 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom. God in his grace opened my eyes to see these truths to comprehend it.

**Give those reasons to the friend, neighbor, coworker as to why you're a Christian. Give them a knowledgeable reason.**

Now I know you CCC and I know you would give a reason for the hope that is within you. I praise God that we take God's Word seriously, seeking to live it and apply it and learn it and study it. But the temptation today is to fear legalism so much that we become nondescript. We equate knowledge with how we feel. **But according to Scripture, it is not legalistic to say a certain knowledge of the Gospel or the workings of God is necessary.** Stand firm upon God's Word, don't be swayed. They were sincere. But sincerity nor zeal is enough. Sincerity and zeal is found in Islam, in Buddhism, Hinduism, and a variety of other things. The Jews lacked a grace and knowledge

that informed their zeal. That's why part of our mission statement here is to "grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus." When those two realities are happening, zeal follows.

The Jews had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. So, how applicable is this to where we live today? To our culture here in Idaho Falls? A zeal with no knowledge. Do not be fooled, brothers and sisters, Apart from the saving work of Christ they are perishing. A works righteousness never saved a soul. Christ is the telos, the end and goal, he alone is who saves. Faith in Him alone is what is necessary. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. It is only by faith alone in Christ alone that the righteousness of God can be ours. That's our message that we take to our neighbors, coworkers, and friends here in southeast Idaho. We have zeal, yes, but not divorced from knowledge.

This truth leads us to our final point of offense for the Jews.

### 3. Christ the Lord

Allow me to read the final portion of our passage today.

6 But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks like this: **Do not say in your heart, "Who will go up to heaven?"** that is, to bring Christ down 7 or, **"Who will go down into the abyss?"** that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. (he's pointing out that humanities works righteousness cannot accomplish anything) 8 On the contrary, what does it say? **The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.** This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame,** 12 since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. 13 **For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

This in many ways was the greatest obstacle for the Jews. They stumbled over his person, that he was the Messiah. They stumbled over his work, that he was the final atoning sacrifice. And they stumbled over this statement, Jesus Christ is the Lord. Paul probably has in mind Isaiah 43:3a among many other texts, which says, For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, and your Savior." - For a Jew, to proclaim Jesus as Lord was to call him "God" and "savior" - this would have been anathema to them.

And who is he Lord of? Just the Jews? Or Gentiles as well. Look at v. 12, a huge issue. Since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. All have sinned and need to be saved.

BUT, No distinction?! Most of the OT makes a distinction! Israel is to be set apart, to be God's special and holy nation. They have the physical sign of circumcision, dietary laws, sabbath festivals, the entirety of the Mosaic Law. **The Gentiles by comparison were idol worshippers, they didn't have the covenants, the prophets or anything.** Even in Ezra 10 this issue is so serious that Israelites had taken foreign wives and had to leave them! How can there be no distinction? Because in God's sovereign plan, the chosen nation of Israel was to be a foreshadowing of his gracious redeeming love going to all nations. The new covenant that Paul is expounding on here is showing how in God's providence Gentiles are now being grafted in. This is a huge point of salvation history. Christ is one with the Father and Lord over both Jew and Gentile.

So, again coming from the human perspective, Paul can say in v. 9 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. And again in v. 11 11 For the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame,** and again in v. 13 13 **For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

So Contrary to salvation by works, or obedience apart from faith, or by any other form of salvation, Paul clearly expounds that the Gospel message is a message of faith. It is to be received by faith. It's a trusting reception that what Christ did for me is enough.

Are we tired of hearing this message? Faith alone in Christ alone? Because if you have been in any faithful Bible preaching church for some time there SHOULD be some repetition concerning this. Hearing that it does not matter the good or bad you have done beforehand, that Christ beckons you to come, to repent and believe, to keep trusting in him.

Friends we need to preach this Gospel to ourselves daily. I made a point to show how zeal without knowledge is not helpful. But look at the purposeful wording Paul uses in v. 9 believing in the heart! So don't hear me saying we just want big-headed Christians. Or mere creedal-confessionalists. Belief from the heart comes from being given a new heart, its not just something people are born into. No, the Gospel message is fundamentally a message of newness.

As Jesus can tell Nicodemus in John 3 - you must be born again, so here this belief is to be rooted in the heart, rooted really in your entire being is what it's saying.

We are not after easy-believism. Jesus made it clear that we must deny ourselves and pick up the cross to follow him. **But Sometimes these verses can be used that way.** Just say these things and you're good. No, salvation is from God, and we are held responsible to believe. It's a free message, but it is not an easy calling to live out. He alone deserves your allegiance, your trust, your love, and your life. Is that where you are today?

To the unbeliever, this is the message we call you to. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. But make no mistake. He will require your all of your life, not just a part of it. He will be Lord over all of it, not just some of it. There are not things you can give to him and other things you hold back from. But it is in Him and Him alone that true freedom and deliverance is found.

**So to the unbeliever here that question I stated earlier is the most important one you can ask: What would God have me do?** Not what I think I should do but what would he have me do? He would have you stop trying, stop arguing and seeking to justify yourself. He would have you stop all of that and admit you're a sinner in need of a savior. You stand before the holiness of God and you admit fully who you are. Don't fight that you have always lived a good life. Don't throw out that you aren't that bad. You must confess and look to Christ. As the great hymn rock of Ages that we sang right before the sermon says,

Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;

You must own that, and then come to say,

thou must save and thou alone

And when you have said that from the heart, understanding that God is solely at work in your salvation, then you can sing with all the saints,  
Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me savior or I die!  
Repent and believe, that's the message Jesus has for you.

And to my fellow saints, have we applied these truths? The main point of this message is that the righteousness of God comes to us by faith alone in Christ alone. Nothing new here CCC. But have we been tempted to look elsewhere? Have we been tempted to be like the Jews and behave as if we are under an old covenant? Are we reverting to our own good deeds, our own good works, our own zeal. **May it never be so!** But something within our flesh always pushes back against the ease of the Gospel message. How can it be like this? How can I come to God with nothing and he in turn gives me everything? We end up suffering from what I call Naaman syndrome. You remember the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5. He is commander of the armies. He suffers from leprosy. He hears of a prophet that can heal him in Israel so he goes to him. He comes with all this gold and silver and sets of clothing. And what does Elisha the prophet do? He wants none of the gifts. But he tells Naaman go wash 7 times in the Jordan river and you will be clean.

And Naaman is furious! He thinks it's too easy. He could have washed in the rivers in Aram! But his servants speak wisdom and he does it and is healed. Friends, sometimes we can be like Naaman and let our pride get in the way of the Gospel. We can be tempted to live according to the flesh and think, I've been a Christian for 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and I still sin! Maybe I should do something extra to even out the scales, maybe I should give a little extra this Christmas so God won't be so mad, maybe I should serve more because I don't measure up, maybe I should do something nice for someone so God will forgive me, maybe I should, maybe I should, maybe I should...

All the while God is already saying, I already have. I have done it all. My son's sacrifice is sufficient. Don't place yourself under the law. Day by day remind yourself of the Gospel. The Gospel that freed you. And live in light of that.

Brothers and sisters, these obstacles that the Jews faced when coming to Christ are in many ways similar to the ones you and I faced or anyone else does today. We stumble over Christ, we want to do things our way. Or we seek to earn our standing before God, not living as if Christ is truly the end and goal of the law. And lastly we fail to live as if Christ is Lord over all.

Praise God that he saved us, continues to save others, and calls you and I to be a part of that work. We see from both sides in these chapters how God is at work, and man is called to believe. In closing, let me encourage our hearts with v. 13 - For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Let's pray.